

PARENTS & CHILDREN  
AN ANTHOLOGY

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

THE WILL TO LOVE  
THE DAWN'S DELAY  
BLONDEL  
MATTHEW ARNOLD  
AFTER PURITANISM  
THE RETURN OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE  
BEHIND BOTH LINES  
FRANK HARRIS  
THE TABLE OF TRUTH  
SAMUEL JOHNSON  
THE SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

*With WILLIAM GERHARDI*

THE CASANOVA FABLE

*With MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE*

BRAVE OLD WORLD

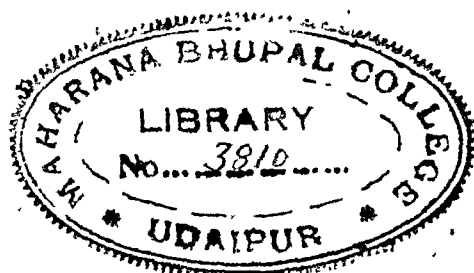
*ANTHOLOGIES*

INVECTIVE AND ABUSE  
MORE INVECTIVE  
THE WORST OF LOVE  
WHAT THEY SAID AT THE TIME

# PARENTS & CHILDREN

## AN ANTHOLOGY

EDITED, WITH NOTES, BY  
HUGH KINGSMILL



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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
ROGER ASCHAM . . . To his Wife Margaret . . .	11
SIR WALTER RALEIGH . . . A Letter of Consolation. . .	15
THE HERBERTS . . . A Mother at Oxford . . .	17
An Undutiful Son . . .	18
NICHOLAS FARRER . . . Life at Little Gidding . . .	20
OLIVER CROMWELL . . . His Son Richard . . .	22
His Daughter, Bridget Ireton . . .	24
His Mother . . .	24
JOHN BUNYAN . . . In Prison . . .	26
JOHN MILTON . . . . .	28
JAMES II. . . . . Mary and Anne . . .	30
THE "PROUD" DUKE OF SOMERSET . . . . .	34
ALEXANDER POPE . . . His Father's Tuition . . .	35
THE NEWGATE CALENDAR . . . A Scotch Capulet. . .	36
RICHARD SAVAGE . . . His Mother . . .	40
SAMUEL JOHNSON . . . The Plaything of Dotage . . .	47
The Indulgence of Children . . .	48
Positive Rules . . .	48

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
SAMUEL JOHNSON ( <i>contd.</i> ) .	Contempt for Parental Authority . . . 49
	Fixing Infant Impressions . . . 49
	His Mother's Death . . . 50
LORD CHESTERFIELD .	Advice to a Son . . . 51
	Advice to a Godson . . . 56
JOHN AND POLLY WILKES . . . . .	58
CHARLES JAMES FOX .	Father and Son . . . 61
	Lord Shelburne on Lord Holland . . . 64
EDWARD GIBBON . . .	The Maternal Office . . . 65
	Lover and Son . . . 66
	An Amiable and Deserving Woman . . . 67
JAMES BOSWELL . . .	To Sir David Dalrymple . . . 68
	To W. T. Temple . . . 69
	To Andrew Mitchell . . . 70
	To W. T. Temple . . . 71
FANNY BURNEY . . .	Fanny goes to Court . . . 72
	Journey to Windsor . . . 73
	A Conference with her Father . . . 75
	Fanny Resigns . . . 76
WILLIAM COWPER . . .	On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture . . . 78
ANNA SEWARD . . .	An Aged Nursling . . . 81
THE EDGEWORTHS . . .	Advice to an Irish Landowner . . . 84
	No Room for Malice . . . 85
	A Son's Regret . . . 86
	Insecticide . . . 86
	An Approving Husband . . . 86
	A Caution against Meanness . . . 87

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
ROBERT BURNS . . . A Poor Man's Son . . .	89
. . . Reunion after Death . . .	91
ERASMUS DARWIN . . . His Sons . . .	92
THOMAS HOLCROFT. . . His Father . . .	96
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH . . . His Mother . . .	100
. . . His Daughter Dora . . .	101
WILLIAM HAZLITT . . . The Death of an Infant Son . . .	104
LORD BYRON . . . His Mother . . .	105
. . . Byron on his Mother . . .	107
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY . . . To his Father . . .	109
. . . To his friend Hogg . . .	110
. . . To Elizabeth Hitchener, after his Marriage . . .	110
. . . To his Father . . .	111
. . . To William Godwin . . .	112
. . . To his Father . . .	112
. . . His Father to Shelley . . .	113
. . . To the Duke of Norfolk . . .	114
. . . Harriet Shelley to Mrs. Nugent	114
WILLIAM GODWIN . . . Shelley to Godwin . . .	115
. . . Godwin to Shelley . . .	116
. . . Shelley's Account of his Marriage to Mary Godwin . . .	116
. . . Godwin's Account . . .	117
THOMAS DE QUINCEY . . . The Burden of the Incom- municable . . .	118
SYDNEY SMITH . . . His Father improved by Age . . .	120
. . . Losing a Limb . . .	120
. . . The Birth of Douglas . . .	121

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
SYDNEY SMITH ( <i>contd.</i> ) . . .	
Douglas at a Public School . . .	121
The Death of Douglas . . .	122
Sydney Smith's Death . . .	123
CHARLES LAMB . . .	
A Portrait of a Father . . .	124
JOHN KEATS . . .	
His Mother . . .	126
WILLIAM WILBERFORCE . . .	
Do Ut Des . . .	127
Bickersteth on Prayer . . .	127
Samuel's Eternal Interests . . .	128
JOHN STUART MILL . . .	
His Education . . .	129
ABRAHAM LINCOLN . . .	
Lincoln's Early Years . . .	133
His Father's Death . . .	135
WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR . . .	
His Sons . . .	137
QUEEN VICTORIA . . .	
Memorandum to the Prince of Wales . . .	141
Prince Edward to Lord Palmerston . . .	142
Prince Edward to Lord Russell . . .	143
Prince Edward to Dr. Acland . . .	143
The Engagement of Princess Alice . . .	144
THOMAS CARLYLE . . .	
His Father . . .	145
MRS. THOMAS CARLYLE . . .	
"The Worst-natured of Women" . . .	147
Two Wax Candles . . .	147
CHARLES DICKENS . . .	
His Father . . .	149
The Blacking Warehouse . . .	150
MATTHEW ARNOLD . . .	
Rugby Chapel . . .	153
THE BRONTËS . . .	
Haworth Parsonage . . .	155
The Brontë Children . . .	155
Charlotte Brontë . . .	158
Patrick Brontë . . .	159



# CONTENTS

	PAGE
ANTHONY TROLLOPE . . . . .	161
His Father . . . . .	164
His Mother . . . . .	169
HERBERT SPENCER . . . . .	170
His Father . . . . .	172
His Mother . . . . .	175
SAMUEL BUTLER . . . . .	176
Canon Butler . . . . .	177
Mrs. Butler . . . . .	178
A Revised Verdict . . . . .	180
JOHN RUSKIN . . . . .	181
A Mother at Oxford . . . . .	184
HENRY CHAPLIN . . . . .	180
From his Mother . . . . .	181
To his Eldest Daughter . . . . .	184
EDMUND GOSSE . . . . .	191
Father and Mother . . . . .	193
HENRY LABOUCHERE . . . . .	195
Sparing a Father's Feelings . . . . .	197
BRAMWELL BOOTH . . . . .	201
A "Motherer" . . . . .	202
His Last Days . . . . .	204
LORD BERNERS . . . . .	206
His Parents . . . . .	210
WILLIAM GERHARDI . . . . .	213
Bolton . . . . .	219
Monte Carlo . . . . .	
The New Riviera . . . . .	
DAPHNE DU MAURIER . . . . .	206
Gerald . . . . .	210
LORD RIBBLESDALE . . . . .	213
Charles Lister . . . . .	219
PAT O'MARA . . . . .	
In a Liverpool Slum . . . . .	
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	219

ROGER ASCHAM, 1515-1568

*Roger Ascham, a pioneer of the New Learning in Tudor England, and tutor to Elizabeth in her youth, was, as the following letter suggests, a great admirer of Cicero.*

TO HIS WIFE MARGARET

November 1568.

MINE OWN GOOD MARGARET,—

The more I think upon your sweet babe, as I do many times both day and night, the greater cause I always find of giving thanks continually to God for his singular goodness bestowed at this time upon the child, yourself, and me, even because it hath rather pleased him to take the child to himself into heaven, than to leave it here with us still on earth. When I mused on the matter, as nature, flesh, and fatherly fantasy did carry me, I found nothing but sorrows and care, which very much did vex and trouble me, but at last forsaking these worldly thoughts, and referring me wholly to the will and order of God in the matter, I found such a change, such a cause of joy, such a plenty of God's grace towards the child, and of his goodness towards you and me, as neither my heart can comprehend, nor yet my tongue express the twentieth part thereof.

Nevertheless, because God and goodwill hath so joined you and me together as we must not only be the one a comfort to the other in sorrow, but also partakers together in any joy, I could not but declare unto you what just cause I think we both have of comfort and gladness by that God hath so graciously dealt with us

PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

as he hath. My first step from care to comfort was this, I thought God had done his will with our child, and because God by his wisdom knoweth what is best, and by his goodness will do best, I was by and by fully persuaded the best that can be is done with our sweet child, but seeing God's wisdom is unsearchable with any man's heart, and his goodness is unspeakable with any man's tongue, I will come down from such high thoughts, and talk more sensibly with you, and lay open before you such matter as may be both a full comfort of all our cares past, and also a just cause of rejoicing as long as we live. You well remember our continued desire and wish, our nightly prayer together, that God would vouchsafe to us to increase the number of this world; we wished that nature should beautifully perform the work by us; we did talk how to bring up our child in learning and virtue; we had care to provide for it, so as honest fortune should favour and follow it. And see, sweet wife, how mercifully God hath dealt with us in all points, for what wish could desire, what prayer could crave, what nature could perform, what virtue could deserve, what fortune could afford, both we have received, and our child doth enjoy already. And because our desire (thanked be God) was always joined with honesty, and our prayers mingled with fear, and applied always to the world too, the will and pleasure of God hath given us more than we wished, and that which is better for us now than we could hope to think upon; but you desire to hear and know how many, even thus, we desired to be made vessels to increase the world, and it hath pleased God to make us vessels to increase heaven,

which is the greatest honour to man, the greatest joy to heaven, the greatest spite to the devil, the greatest sorrow to hell, that any man can imagine. Secondly, when nature had performed what she would grace stepped forth and took our child from nature, and gave it such gifts over and above the power of nature, as where it could not creep in earth by nature it was straitway well able to go to heaven by grace. It could not then speak by nature, and now it doth praise God by grace; it could not then comfort the sick and careful mother by nature, and now through prayer is able to help father and mother by grace; and yet, thanked be nature, that hath done all she could do, and blessed be grace that hath done more and better than we would wish she should have done. Peradventure yet you do wish that nature had kept it from death a little longer, yea, but grace hath carried it where now no sickness can follow, nor any death hereafter meddle with it; and instead of a short life with troubles on earth, it doth now live a life that never shall end with all manner of joy in heaven.

And now, Margaret, go to, I pray you, and tell me as you think, do you love your sweet babe so little, do you envy his happy state so much, yea, once to wish that nature should have rather followed your pleasure in keeping your child in this miserable world, than grace should have purchased such profit for your child in bringing him to such felicity in heaven? Thirdly, you may say unto me, if the child had lived in this world, it might have come to such goodness by grace and virtue as might have turned to great comfort to us, to good service to our country, and served to have deserved as

PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

high a place in heaven as he doth now. To this, in short, I answer, ought we not in all things to submit to God's good will and pleasure, and thereafter to rule our affections, which I doubt not but you will endeavour to do? And therefore I will say no more, but with all comfort, to you here, and a blessing hereafter, which I doubt not but is prepared for you.

Your dearly loving husband,

ROGER ASKAM.

## SIR WALTER RALEIGH, 1552-1637

*Walter Raleigh, who had been imprisoned thirteen years in the Tower by James I., was released in 1616 on the understanding that he would go to Guiana in search of gold mines. The Spanish ambassador in London was assured that Raleigh would not molest any Spanish settlers, but Raleigh did not regard this assurance as practical politics, and on reaching the mouth of the Orinoco attacked and set fire to the Spanish settlement of Saint Thomé. His son Walter was killed in the assault, and it is for this loss that Raleigh consoles his wife in the letter given below. Raleigh returned to England having achieved nothing, was imprisoned again, and sentenced to execution in 1618. He composed his spirits before the execution by smoking a pipe, and on the scaffold, with the dauntless love of the Elizabethans for a well-turned phrase, remarked of the axe that it was a sharp medicine, but would cure all diseases, and when the executioner told him his head was not placed correctly, replied: "What matter how the head lie, so the heart be right?"*

### A LETTER OF CONSOLATION

I WAS loth to write, because I knew not how to comfort you: and, God knows, I never knew what sorrow meant till now. All that I can say to you is, that you must obey the will and providence of God; and remember, that the Queen's Majesty bore the loss of Prince Henry with a magnanimous heart, and the Lady Harrington of her only son. Comfort your heart (dearest Bess), I shall have sorrow for us both. I shall sorrow the less, because I have not long to sorrow, because not long to live. . . . I have cleansed my ship of sick men, and sent them home. I hope God will send us somewhat

PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

ere we return. Commend me to all at Lothbury. You shall hear from me, if I live, from the Newfoundland, where I mean to make clean my ships and revictual: for I have tobacco enough to pay for it. The Lord bless you and comfort you, that you may bear patiently the death of your valiant son.

## THE HERBERTS

*George Herbert, a religious poet (1593–1633), is the subject of one of Izaak Walton's Lives. The quotations given here show what his mother was like, and what little pleasure it gave her when George bettered the instruction in virtue which she had inflicted on her eldest son.*

### A MOTHER AT OXFORD

THIS mother of George Herbert—of whose person, and wisdom, and virtue, I intend to give a true account in a seasonable place—was the happy mother of seven sons and three daughters, which she would often say was Job's number, and Job's distribution; and as often, bless God, that they were neither defective in their shapes, or in their reason; and very often reprove them that they did not praise God for so great a blessing.

. . . I have told her birth, her marriage, and the number of her children, and have given some short account of them. I shall next tell the Reader, that her husband died when our George was about the age of four years: I am next to tell, that she continued twelve years a widow; that she then married happily to a noble gentleman, the brother and heir of the Lord Danvers, Earl of Danby, who did highly value both her person and the most excellent endowments of her mind.

In this time of her widowhood, she being desirous to give Edward, her eldest son, such advantages of learning, and other education, as might suit his birth and fortune, and thereby make him the more fit for the service of his country, did, at his being of a fit age, remove from Montgomery Castle with him, and some



of her younger sons, to Oxford; and having entered Edward into Queen's College, and provided him a fit tutor, she commended him to his care, yet she continued there with him, and still kept him in a moderate awe of herself, and so much under her own eye, as to see and converse with him daily: but she managed this power over him without any such rigid sourness as might make her company a torment to her child; but with such a sweetness and compliance with the recreations and pleasures of youth, as did incline him willingly to spend much of his time in the company of his dear and careful mother; which was to her great content: for she would often say, "That as our bodies take a nourishment suitable to the meat on which we feed; so our souls do as insensibly take in vice by the example or conversation with wicked company": and would therefore as often say, "That ignorance of vice was the best preservation of virtue; and that the very knowledge of wickedness was as tinder to inflame and kindle sin and keep it burning." For these reasons she endeared him to her own company, and continued with him in Oxford four years; in which time her great and harmless wit, her cheerful gravity, and her obliging behaviour, gained her an acquaintance and friendship with most of any eminent worth or learning, that were at that time in or near the University.

#### AN UNDUTIFUL SON

. . . Before I proceed farther, I must look back to the time of Mr. Herbert's being made prebend, and tell the Reader that, not long after, his Mother being in-

formed of his intentions to rebuild that Church, and apprehending the great trouble and charge that he was like to draw upon himself, his relations and friends, before it could be finished, sent for him from London to Chelsea—where she then dwelt—and at his coming, said: “George, I sent for you, to persuade you to commit Simony, by giving your patron as good a gift as he has given to you; namely, that you give him back his prebend; for, George, it is not for your weak body, and empty purse, to undertake to build Churches.” Of which, he desired he might have a day’s time to consider, and then make her an answer. And at his return to her the next day, when he had first desired her blessing, and she given it him, his next request was, “That she would, at the age of thirty-three years, allow him to become an undutiful son; for he had made a vow to God, that, if he were able, he would rebuild that Church.” And then shewed her such reasons for his resolution, that she presently subscribed to be one of his benefactors; and undertook to solicit William, Earl of Pembroke, to become another, who subscribed for fifty pounds; and not long after, by a witty and persuasive letter from Mr. Herbert, made it fifty pounds more.

*(Izaak Walton’s Lives.)*

## NICHOLAS FARRER, 1592-1637

*Nicholas Farrer, or Ferrar, subject of the following eulogy from Izaak Walton's sometimes fatuous pen, was unmarried. The community he set up at Little Gidding was, however, not an attempt at a religious order but an organisation of family life on what Nicholas Ferrar thought sound lines. His colleagues in this enterprise were his brother, John Ferrar, and his brother-in-law, John Collet, and half his congregation consisted of the ill-starred children of John Ferrar and John Collet, for Collet had round about fourteen children, and John Ferrar three.*

### LIFE AT LITTLE GIDDING

THIS family, which I have said to be in number about thirty, were a part of them his kindred, and the rest chosen to be of a temper fit to be moulded into a devout life; and all of them were for their dispositions serviceable, and quiet, and humble, and free from scandal. Having thus fitted himself for his family, he did, about the year 1630, betake himself to a constant and methodical service of God; and it was in this manner: He, being accompanied with most of his family, did himself use to read the common prayers—for he was a Deacon—every day, at the appointed hours of ten and four, in the Parish Church, which was very near his house, and which he had both repaired and adorned. . . . And he did also constantly read the Matins every morning at the hour of six, either in the Church, or in an Oratory, which was within his own house. And many of the family did there continue with him after the prayers were ended, and there they spent some hours in singing

Hymns, or Anthems, sometimes in the Church, and often to an Organ in the Oratory. And there they sometimes betook themselves to meditate, or to pray privately, or to read a part of the New Testament to themselves, or to continue their praying or reading the Psalms; and in case the Psalms were not always read in the day, then Mr. Farrer, and others of the congregation, did at night, at the ringing of a watch-bell, repair to the Church or Oratory, and there betake themselves to prayers and lauding God, and reading the Psalms that had not been read in the day: and when these, or any part of the congregation, grew weary or faint, the watch-bell was rung, sometimes before, and sometimes after midnight; and then another part of the family rose, and maintained the watch, sometimes by praying, or singing lauds to God, or reading the Psalms; and when, after some hours, they also grew weary or faint, then they rung the watch-bell and were also relieved by some of the former, or by a new part of the society, which continued their devotions—as hath been mentioned—until morning. And it is to be noted, that in this continued serving of God, the Psalter or the whole Book of Psalms, was in every four and twenty hours sung or read over, from the first to the last verse: and this was done as constantly as the sun runs his circle every day about the world, and then begins the same instant that it ended.

Thus did Mr. Farrer and his happy family serve God day and night. . . .

(*Izaak Walton's Lives.*)

## OLIVER CROMWELL, 1599-1658

*It is interesting to notice that while Cromwell was anxious to cultivate the practical energies of his eldest son Richard, and hoped that his wife would be "everyway fruitful," in his advice to his daughter, he is concerned simply for her spiritual welfare, even to the extent of requiring her to see in her husband, General Ireton, the image of Christ—a whole-time employment.*

*When Cromwell's mother died, he buried her with great pomp in the Abbey, though she had expressed the wish to be buried simply.*

*These traits are, however, inevitable in a great man of action, and do not detract from Cromwell's genuine desire to be more saintly than circumstances (for instance, the siege of Drogheda) would permit.*

### HIS SON RICHARD

#### 1

I HAVE delivered my son up to you; and I hope you will counsel him: he will need it; and, indeed, I believe he likes well what you say, and will be advised by you. I wish he may be serious; the times require it.

#### 2

I have committed my Son to you; pray give him advice. I envy him not his contents; but I fear he should be swallowed up in them. I would have him mind and understand Business, read a little History, study the Mathematics and Cosmography—these are good with subordination to the things of God. Better than Idleness,

or mere outward worldly contents. These fit for Public services, for which a man is born.

(*Letters to Richard Mayor, Richard Cromwell's  
Father-in-law.*)

3

DEAR CROMWELL,

I take your letter kindly: I like expressions when they come plainly from the heart, and are not strained nor affected.

I am persuaded it's the Lord's mercy to place you where you are: I wish you may own it and be thankful, fulfilling all relations to the glory of God. Seek the Lord and His face continually—let this be the business of your life and strength, and let all things be subservient and in order to this! You cannot find nor behold the face of God but in Christ; therefore labour to know God in Christ; which the Scripture makes to be the sum of all, even Life Eternal. Because the true knowledge is not literal or speculative; but inward; transforming the mind to it. . . .

Take heed of an inactive vain spirit! Recreate yourself with Sir Walter Raleigh's *History*: it's a body of History, and will add much more to your understanding than fragments of Story.—Intend to understand the Estate I have settled; it's your concernment to know it all, and how it stands. I have heretofore suffered much by too much trusting others. I know my brother Mayor will be helpful to you in all this.

You will think, perhaps, I need not advise you to

## PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

love your Wife! The Lord teach you how to do it;—or else it will be done ill-favouredly. Though Marriage be no instituted Sacrament; yet where the undefiled bed is, and love, this union aptly resembles Christ and His Church. If you can truly love your Wife, what doth Christ bear to His Church and every poor soul therein. . . . Commend me to your Wife; tell her I entirely love her, and rejoice in the goodness of the Lord to her. I wish her everyway fruitful. I thank her for her loving letter. . . .

*(Letter to Richard Cromwell.)*

### HIS DAUGHTER, BRIDGET IRETON

Who ever tasted that the Lord is gracious, without some sense of self, vanity, and badness? Who ever tasted that graciousness of His, and could go less in desire—less than pressing after full enjoyment? Dear Heart, press on; let not Husband, let not anything cool thy affections after Christ. I hope he will be an occasion to inflame them. That which is best worthy of love in thy Husband is that of the image of Christ he bears. Look on that, and love it best, and all the rest for that. I pray for thee and him; do so for me.

*(Letter to Bridget.)*

### HIS MOTHER

A little while before her death, she gave my lord her blessing in these words: "The Lord cause His face

OLIVER CROMWELL

to shine upon you, and comfort you in all your adversities, and enable you to do great things for the glory of your Most High God, and to be a relief unto His people. My dear son, I have my heart with thee. A good-night!"  
(*Thurloe.*)



## JOHN BUNYAN, 1628-1688

*Bunyan was imprisoned within a few months of the Restoration for refusing to promise that he would not preach in public. The authorities were anxious to avoid penalising him, but his resolute refusal to compromise in any way left them no alternative.*

### IN PRISON

I SAW what was coming, and had two considerations especially on my heart, how to be able to endure, should my imprisonment be long and tedious, and how to be able to encounter death should that be my portion. I was made to see that if I would suffer rightly, I must pass sentence of death upon everything that can properly be called a thing of this life, even to reckon myself, my wife, my children, my health, my enjoyments all as dead to me, and myself as dead to them. Yet I was a man compassed with infirmities. The parting with my wife and poor children hath often been to me in this place as the pulling of my flesh from my bones; and that not only because I am too, too, fond of those great mercies, but also because I should have often brought to my mind the hardships, miseries, and wants my poor family was like to meet with should I be taken from them, especially my poor blind child, who lay nearer my heart than all I had besides. Poor child, thought I, what sorrow art thou like to have for thy portion in this world! Thou must be beaten, suffer hunger, cold, nakedness, and a thousand calamities, though I cannot now endure the wind should blow on thee. But yet, thought I, I must venture all with God,

JOHN BUNYAN

though it goeth to the quick to leave you. I was as a man who was pulling down his house upon the head of his wife and children. Yet thought I, I must do it—I must do it.

## JOHN MILTON, 1608-1674

*Milton, who married three times, had children only by his first wife, and, as the following quotations show, neither received nor conferred happiness in the family circle.*

### 1

IT is often a matter of sorrowful reflection with me, that those with whom I have been linked by chance or the law, by propinquity or some connection of no real meaning, are continually at hand to invest my home, to stun me with their noise and wear out my temper, whilst those who are endeared to me by the closest sympathy of tastes and pursuits are almost all withheld from my embrace either by death or an insuperable distance of place.

*(Milton to Carlo Dati in Florence, 1647.)*

### 2

. . . By his Third Wife Elizabeth . . . he never had any child; and those he had by the First he made serviceable to him in that very particular in which he most wanted their Service, and supplied his want of Eye-sight by their Eyes and Tongue; . . . excusing only The Eldest Daughter by reason of her bodily Infirmary, and difficult utterance of Speech, (which to say truth I doubt was the Principal cause of excusing her), the other two were Condemn'd to the performance of all the Languages of whatever Book he should at one time or other think fit to peruse; viz. The Hebrew (and I think the Syriac), the Greek, the Latin, the Italian, Spanish, and French. All which

sorts of Books to be confined to Read, without understanding one word, must needs be a Tryal of Patience, almost beyond Endurance; yet it was endured by both for a long time; yet the irksomeness of this imployment could not always be concealed, but broke out more and more into expressions of uneasiness; so that at length they were all (even the eldest also) sent out to learn some Curious and Ingenious sorts of Manufacture, that are proper for Women to learn, particularly Imbroideries in Gold or Silver.

*(Edward Phillips.)*

## 3

. . . The portion due to me from Mr. Powell, my former wife's father, I leave to the unkind children I had by her, having received no parte of it: but my meaning is, they shall have no benefit of my estate than the said portion, and what I have besides done for them; they having been very undutifull to me. All the residue of my estate I leave to the disposall of Elizabeth, my loving wife.

*(From Milton's Will.)*

## JAMES II., 1633-1707

*Although both the daughters of James II., Mary, wife of William of Orange, and Anne, wife of George, Prince of Denmark, turned against him at the time of William's voyage to England and seizure of the throne, the degrees of culpability were very different. Mary had to be disloyal either to her husband, with whom she was slavishly in love, or to her father. Anne, and her lamentable husband, were actuated by nothing except self-interest, and were severely disillusioned in their hopes when William was safely on the throne.*

### MARY AND ANNE

#### QUEEN MARY BEATRICE TO MARY, PRINCESS OF ORANGE, HER STEP-DAUGHTER

Sept. 28, 1688.

I AM much troubled what to say, at a time when nothing is talked of but the prince of Orange coming over with an army; this has been said for a long time, and believed by a great many, but I do protest to you that I never did believe till now, very lately, that I have no possibility left of doubting it. The second part of the news I will never believe, which is, that you are to come over with him, for I know you to be too good. I do not believe you could have such a thought against the worst of fathers, much less to perform it against the best, who has always been so kind to you, and I do believe, *has loved you better than any of his children.*

## JAMES II. TO HIS DAUGHTER MARY

WHITEHALL, Sept. 26, 1688.

I see by yours of the 20th inst. that the prince of Orange was gone to the Hague; and from thence, that he was arrived. What his business is there at this time, I do really believe you are not acquainted with, nor with the resolution he has taken, which alarms all people here very much.

WHITEHALL, Sept. 28, 1688.

This evening I had yours of the 4th, from Dieren, by which I find that you were then to go to the Hague, being sent for by the prince. I suppose it is to inform you of his design of coming to England, which he has been so long a contriving. *I hope it will have been as great a surprise to you as it was to me, when I first heard it*, being sure it is not in your nature to approve of so unjust an undertaking. I have been all this day so busy, to endeavour to be in some condition to defend myself from so unjust and unexpected an attempt, that I am almost tired, and so I shall say no more but that I shall always have as much kindness for you as you will give me leave to have.

WHITEHALL, Oct. 2, 1688.

I was this morning abroad to take the air, and to see some batteries I have made below Woolwich for the defence of the river. And since I came back, I have been so very busy to prepare things for the invasion intended, that I could not write till now, that 'tis near midnight,

## PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

so that you might not wonder if my letter be short. For news, you will have it from others, for really I am very weary; so shall end, which I do, with assuring you of my continuing as kind to you as you can desire.

WHITEHALL, Oct. 9, 1688.

I had no letter from you by this post, which you see does not hinder me from writing to you now, not knowing, certainly, what may have hindered you from doing it. I easily believe you may be embarrassed how to write to me, now that the unjust design of the prince of Orange invading me is so public. And though I know you are a good wife, and ought to be so, yet for the same reason I must believe you will be still as good a daughter to a father that has always loved you so tenderly, and that has never done the least thing to make you doubt it. I shall say no more, and believe you very uneasy all this time, for the concern you must have for a husband and a father. You shall still find me kind to you, if you desire it.

### THE PRINCESS ANNE TO THE PRINCE OF ORANGE

*November 18.*

Having on all occasions given you and my sister all imaginable assurances of the real friendship and kindness I have for you both, I hope it is not necessary for me to repeat anything of that kind; and on the subject you have now wrote to me, I shall not trouble you with many compliments, only, in short, to assure you that you have my wishes for your good success in this so

JAMES II.

just undertaking; and *I hope the prince (Anne's husband) will soon be with you, to let you see his readiness to join with you, who, I am sure, will do you all the service that lies in his power. He went yesterday with the king towards Salisbury, intending to go from thence to you as soon as his friends thought proper.* I am not yet certain if I shall continue here, or remove into the city. That shall depend upon the advice my friends will give me; but wherever I am, I shall be ready to show you how much I am

Your humble servant,

ANNE.



## THE "PROUD" DUKE OF SOMERSET, 1662-1748

HIS two youngest daughters were alternately obliged to stand and watch him during his afternoon siesta. On one occasion, Lady Charlotte, being fatigued, sat down, when the Duke awaking unexpectedly, expressed his surprise at her disobedience, and declared he should remember her want of decorum in his will. He left this daughter £20,000 less than the other.

*(Joseph Addison.)*

## ALEXANDER POPE, 1688-1744

### HIS FATHER'S TUITION

WHEN Mr. Pope was yet a child his father, though no poet, would set him to make English verses. He was pretty difficult to please, and would often send the boy back to new turn them. When they were to his mind he took great pleasure in them, and would say, "These are good rhymes."

*(William Warburton.)*

## THE NEWGATE CALENDAR

### A SCOTCH CAPULET

WILLIAM SHAW was an upholsterer at Edinburgh in the year 1721. He had a daughter, Catherine Shaw, who lived with him. She encouraged the addresses of John Lawson, a jeweller, to whom William Shaw declared the most insuperable objections, alleging him to be a profligate young man, addicted to every kind of dissipation. He was forbidden the house; but the daughter continuing to see him clandestinely, the father, on the discovery, kept her strictly confined.

William Shaw had for some time pressed his daughter to receive the addresses of a son of Alexander Robertson, a friend and neighbour; and one evening, he being very urgent with her thereon, she peremptorily refused, declaring she preferred death to being young Robertson's wife. The father grew enraged and the daughter more positive; so that the most passionate expressions arose on both sides, and the words "barbarity, cruelty and death" were frequently pronounced by the daughter. At length he left her, locking the door after him.

The greatest part of the buildings at Edinburgh were formed on the plan of the chambers in our inns of court; so that many families inhabited rooms on the same floor, having all one common staircase. William Shaw dwelt in one of these, and only a single partition divided his apartment from that of James Morrison, a watchcase-maker. This man had indistinctly overheard the conversation and quarrel between Catherine Shaw and her father, but was particularly struck with the repetition of the above words, she having pronounced them loudly

and emphatically. For some little time after the father had gone out all was silent, but presently Morrison heard several groans from the daughter. Alarmed, he ran to some of his neighbours under the same roof. These, entering Morrison's room and listening attentively, not only heard the groans, but distinctly heard Catherine Shaw two or three times faintly exclaim: "Cruel father, thou art the cause of my death!" Struck with this, they flew to the door of Shaw's apartment; they knocked—no answer was given. The knocking was still repeated—still no answer. Suspicions had before arisen; they were now confirmed. A constable was procured, an entrance forced. Catherine was found weltering in her blood, and the fatal knife by her side. She was alive, but speechless; but on questioning as to her owing her death to her father she was just able to make a motion with her head, apparently in the affirmative, and expired.

Just at the critical moment William Shaw returned and entered the room. All eyes were on him. He saw his neighbours and a constable in his apartment, and seemed much disordered thereat; but at the sight of his daughter he turned pale, trembled, and was ready to sink. The first surprise, and the succeeding horror, left little doubt of his guilt in the breasts of the beholders; and even that little was done away with on the constable discovering that the shirt of William Shaw was bloody.

He was instantly hurried before a magistrate, and, upon the depositions of all the parties, committed to prison on suspicion. He was shortly after brought to trial, when, in his defence, he acknowledged having confined his daughter to prevent her intercourse with

## PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

Lawson; that he had frequently insisted on her marrying Robertson; and that he had quarrelled with her on the subject the evening she was found murdered, as the witness Morrison had deposed; but he averred that he left his daughter unharmed and untouched, and that the blood found upon his shirt was there in consequence of his having bled himself some days before and the bandage becoming untied. These assertions did not weigh with the jury, when opposed to the strong circumstantial evidence of the daughter's expressions of "barbarity, cruelty, death," and of "Cruel father, thou art the cause of my death"—together with that apparently affirmative motion with her head, and of the blood so seemingly providentially discovered on the father's shirt. On these several concurring circumstances was William Shaw found guilty and executed, and was hanged in chains, at Leith Walk, in November 1721.

In August, 1722, as a man who had become the possessor of the late William Shaw's apartment was rummaging by chance in the chamber where Catherine Shaw died, he accidentally perceived a paper which had fallen into a cavity on one side of the chimney. It was folded as a letter, which, on being opened, contained the following:—

BARBAROUS FATHER,—Your cruelty in having put it out of my power ever to join my fate to that of the only man I could love, and tyrannically insisting upon my marrying one whom I always hated, has made me form a resolution to put an end to an existence which is become a burthen to me. I doubt not I shall find mercy

## THE NEWGATE CALENDAR

in another world; for sure no benevolent being can require that I should any longer live in torment to myself in this! My death I lay to your charge: when you read this, consider yourself as the inhuman wretch that plunged the murderous knife into the bosom of the unhappy

CATHERINE SHAW.

This letter being shown, the handwriting was recognised and avowed to be Catherine Shaw's by many of her relations and friends. The magistracy of Edinburgh, on a scrutiny, being convinced of its authenticity, they ordered the body of William Shaw to be taken from the gibbet and given to his family for interment; and as the only reparation to his memory and the honour of his surviving relations they caused a pair of colours to be waved over his grave in token of his innocence.

## RICHARD SAVAGE (Died 1743)

*The following indictment of a mother is from Samuel Johnson's "Life of Savage", one of the finest short biographies in modern literature. Johnson was an intimate friend of Savage, and it has been suggested that he accepted Savage's version of his ill-treatment too unreservedly. Attempts have been made to prove that Savage was not Lady Macclesfield's son, and the theory has been put forward that he was the son of the shoemaker in whose charge Lady Macclesfield placed one of her illegitimate children, and that he claimed to be this child, who, it is alleged, died in infancy. On the other hand, if Savage was an impostor, it is strange that Lady Macclesfield took no steps to suppress any of the three narratives, of which Johnson's was the last, setting forth her inhumanity to her son. Boswell writes that "the world must vibrate in a state of uncertainty as to what was the truth," and, unless some fresh evidence is discovered, it looks as if the world must continue to vibrate.*

*The third extract deals with Savage's trial for manslaughter.*

### HIS MOTHER

#### I

WHATEVER were her motives, no sooner was her son born than she discovered a resolution of disowning him; and in a very short time removed him from her sight by committing him to the care of a poor woman, whom she directed to educate him as her own, and enjoined never to inform him of his true parents.

Such was the beginning of the life of Richard Savage. Born with a legal claim to honour and to affluence, he was in two months illegitimated by the parliament, and disowned by his mother, doomed to poverty and obscurity,

and launched upon the ocean of life only that he might be swallowed by its quicksands or dashed upon its rocks.

His mother could not indeed infect others with the same cruelty. As it was impossible to avoid the inquiries which the curiosity or tenderness of her relations made after her child, she was obliged to give some account of the measures she had taken; and her mother, the Lady Mason, whether in approbation of her design or to prevent more criminal contrivances, engaged to transact with the nurse, to pay her for her care, and to superintend the education of the child.

## 2

While he was thus cultivating his genius, his father, the Earl Rivers, was seized with a distemper which in a short time put an end to his life. He had frequently inquired after his son, and had always been amused with fallacious and evasive answers; but, being now in his own opinion on his death-bed, he thought it his duty to provide for him among his other natural children, and therefore demanded a positive account of him, with an importunity not to be diverted or denied. His mother, who could no longer refuse an answer, determined at least to give such as should cut him off for ever from that happiness which competence affords, and therefore declared that he was dead; which is perhaps the first instance of a lie invented by a mother to deprive her son of a provision which was designed him by another, and which she could not expect herself though he should lose it.



This was therefore an act of wickedness which could not be defeated, because it could not be suspected; the Earl did not imagine there could exist in a human form a mother that would ruin her son without enriching herself, and therefore bestowed upon some other person £6000 which he had in his will bequeathed to Savage.

The same cruelty which incited his mother to intercept this provision which had been intended him prompted her in a short time to another project—a project worthy of such a disposition. She endeavoured to rid herself from the danger of being at any time made known to him, by sending him secretly to the American Plantations. . . .

Being hindered, by whatever means, from banishing him into another country, she formed soon after a scheme for burying him in poverty and obscurity in his own; and, that his station of life, if not the place of his residence, might keep him for ever at a distance from her, she ordered him to be placed with a shoemaker in Holborn, that, after the usual time of trial, he might become his apprentice.

It is generally reported that this project was for some time successful, and that Savage was employed at the awl longer than he was willing to confess; nor was it perhaps any great advantage to him that an unexpected discovery determined him to quit his occupation.

About this time his nurse, who had always treated him as her own son, died; and it was natural for him to take care of those effects which by her death were, as he imagined, become his own: he therefore went to her house, opened her boxes, and examined her papers,

among which he found some letters written to her by the Lady Mason, which informed him of his birth, and the reasons for which it was concealed.

He was no longer satisfied with the employment which had been allotted to him, but thought he had a right to share the affluence of his mother; and therefore, without scruple, applied to her as her son, and made use of every art to awaken her tenderness and attract her regard. But neither his letters nor the interposition of those friends which his merit or his distress procured him made any impression upon her mind. She still resolved to neglect, though she could no longer disown him.

It was to no purpose that he frequently solicited her to admit him to see her; she avoided him with the most vigilant precaution, and ordered him to be excluded from her house, by whomsoever he might be introduced, and what reason soever he might give for entering it.

Savage was at the same time so touched with the discovery of his real mother that it was his frequent practice to walk in the dark evenings for several hours before her door, in hopes of seeing her as she might come by accident to the window or cross her apartment with a candle in her hand.

But all his assiduity and tenderness were without effect, for he could neither soften her heart nor open her hand, and was reduced to the utmost miseries of want while he was endeavouring to awaken the affection of a mother. He was therefore obliged to seek some other means of support; and having no profession, became by necessity an author.

Mr. Savage had now no hopes of life but from the mercy of the Crown, which was very earnestly solicited by his friends, and which, with whatever difficulty the story may obtain belief, was obstructed only by his mother.

To prejudice the Queen (Caroline, Queen of George II.) against him, she made use of an incident which was omitted in the order of time, that it might be mentioned together with the purpose which it was made to serve. Mr. Savage, when he had discovered his birth, had an incessant desire to speak to his mother, who always avoided him in public, and refused him admission into her house. One evening walking, as it was his custom, in the street that she inhabited, he saw the door of her house by accident open, he entered it, and finding no person in the passage to hinder him, went upstairs to salute her. She discovered him before he entered her chamber, alarmed the family with the most distressful outcries, and when she had by her screams gathered them about her, ordered them to drive out of the house that villain who had forced himself in upon her and endeavoured to murder her. Savage, who had attempted with the most submissive tenderness to soften her rage, hearing her utter so detestable an accusation, thought it prudent to retire, and, I believe, never attempted afterwards to speak to her.

But, shocked as he was with her falsehood and her cruelty, he imagined that she intended no other use of her lie than to set herself free from his embraces and

solicitations, and was very far from suspecting that she would treasure it in her memory as an instrument of future wickedness, or that she would endeavour for this fictitious assault to deprive him of his life.

But when the Queen was solicited for his pardon, and informed of the severe treatment which he had suffered from his judge, she answered, that however unjustifiable might be the manner of his trial, or whatever extenuation the action for which he was condemned might admit, she could not think that man a proper object of the King's mercy who had been capable of entering his mother's house in the night with an intent to murder her.

By whom this atrocious calumny had been transmitted to the Queen; whether she that invented had the front to relate it; whether she found anyone weak enough to credit it, or corrupt enough to concur with her in her hateful design, I know not; but methods had been taken to persuade the Queen so strongly of the truth of it, that she for a long time refused to hear anyone of those who petitioned for his life.

Thus had Savage perished by the evidence of a bawd, a strumpet, and his mother, had not justice and compassion procured him an advocate of rank too great to be rejected unheard, and of virtue too eminent to be heard without being believed. His merit and his calamities happened to reach the ear of the Countess of Hertford, who engaged in his support with all the tenderness that is excited by pity, and all the zeal which is kindled by generosity; and, demanding an audience of the Queen, laid before her the whole series of his mother's cruelty,

exposed the improbability of an accusation by which he was charged with an intent to commit a murder that could produce no advantage, and soon convinced her how little his former conduct could deserve to be mentioned as a reason for extraordinary severity.

The interposition of this lady was so successful that he was soon after admitted to bail, and, on the 9th of March 1728, pleaded the King's pardon.

It is natural to inquire upon what motives his mother could persecute him in a manner so outrageous and implacable; for what reason she could employ all the arts of malice, and all the snares of calumny, to take away the life of her own son, of a son who never injured her, who was never supported by her expense, nor obstructed any prospect of pleasure or advantage; why she should endeavour to destroy him by a lie—a lie which could gain credit, but must vanish of itself at the first moment of examination, and of which only this can be said to make it probable, that it may be observed from her conduct that the most execrable crimes are sometimes committed without apparent temptation.

This mother is still alive, and may perhaps even yet, though her malice was so often defeated, enjoy the pleasure of reflecting that the life which she often endeavoured to destroy was at last shortened by her maternal offices; that though she could not transport her son to the plantations, bury him in the shop of a mechanic, or hasten the hand of the public executioner, she has yet had the satisfaction of embittering all his hours, and forcing him into exigences that hurried on his death.

## SAMUEL JOHNSON, 1709-1784

*The Extracts given below, except for the two letters Johnson wrote to his dying mother, are from Mrs. Thrale's reminiscences of Johnson.*

### THE PLAYTHING OF DOTAGE

THE trick which most parents play with their children, of shewing off their newly acquired accomplishments, disgusted Mr. Johnson beyond expression; he had been treated so himself, he said, till he absolutely loathed his father's caresses, because he knew they were sure to precede some displeasing display of his early abilities; and he used, when neighbours came o' visiting, to run up a tree that he might not be found and exhibited, such as no doubt he was, a prodigy of early understanding. His epitaph upon the duck he killed by treading on it at five years old,

Here lies poor duck  
That Samuel Johnson trod on;  
If he had liv'd it had been good luck,  
For it would have been an odd one;

is a striking example of early expansion of mind and knowledge of language; yet he always seemed more mortified at the recollection of the bustle his parents made with his wit than pleased with thoughts of possessing it. "That (said he to me one day) is the great misery of late marriages, the unhappy produce of them becomes the plaything of dotage: an old man's child (continued he) leads much such a life, I think, as a little boy's dog, teized with awkward fondness, and forced, perhaps, to sit up and beg, as we call it, to

divert a company, who at last go away complaining of their disagreeable entertainment." In consequence of these maxims, and full of indignation against such parents as delight to produce their young ones early into the talking world, I have known Mr. Johnson give a good deal of pain, by refusing to hear the verses the children could recite, or the songs they could sing; particularly one friend who told him that his two sons should repeat Gray's "Elegy" to him alternately, that he might judge who had the happiest cadence. "No, pray, Sir (said he), let the dears both speak it at once; more noise will by that means be made, and the noise will be sooner over."

### THE INDULGENCE OF CHILDREN

Mr. Johnson was himself exceedingly disposed to the general indulgence of children . . . he had strongly persuaded himself of the difficulty people always find to erase early impressions either of kindness or resentment, and said "he should never have so loved his mother when a man, had she not given him coffee she could ill afford, to gratify his appetite when a boy."

### POSITIVE RULES

Mr. Johnson was of opinion, too, that young people should have *positive* not *general* rules given for their direction. "My mother (said he) was always telling me that I did not *behave* myself properly; that I should endeavour to learn *behaviour*, and such cant: but when I replied that she ought to tell me what to do, and

what to avoid, her admonitions were commonly, for that time at least, at an end."

### CONTEMPT FOR PARENTAL AUTHORITY

Of parental authority, indeed, few people thought with a lower degree of estimation. . . . Mr. Johnson caught me . . . reprimanding the daughter of my house-keeper for having sat down unpermitted in her mother's presence. "Why, she gets her living, does she not (said he), without her mother's help? Let the wench alone" . . . and when we were out of the women's sight who were concerned in the dispute: "Poor people's children, dear Lady (said he), never respect them. I did not respect my own mother, though I loved her: and one day, when in anger she called me a puppy, I asked her if she knew what they called a puppy's mother."

### FIXING INFANT IMPRESSIONS

I will relate one thing more that Dr. Johnson said about babyhood before I quit the subject; it was this: "That little people should be encouraged always to tell whatever they hear particularly striking, to some brother, sister, or servant, immediately before the impression is erased by the intervention of newer occurrences. He perfectly remembered the first time he ever heard of Heaven and Hell (he said), because when his mother had made out such a description of both places as she thought likely to seize the attention of her infant auditor, who was then in bed with her, she got up, and dressing him before the usual time, sent him directly to call a



PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

favourite workman in the house, to whom she knew he would communicate the conversation while it was yet impressed upon his mind.

HIS MOTHER'S DEATH

*Jan. 16, 1759.*

DEAR HONOURED MOTHER,

Your weakness afflicts me beyond what I am willing to communicate to you. I do not think you unfit to face death, but I know not how to bear the thought of losing you. Endeavour to do all you can for yourself. Eat as much as you can.

I pray often for you; do you pray for me. I have nothing to add to my last letter.

I am, dear, dear mother,

Your dutiful son,

SAM. JOHNSON.

*Jan. 20, 1759.*

DEAR HONOURED MOTHER,

Neither your condition nor your character make it fit for me to say much. You have been the best mother, and I believe the best woman in the world. I thank you for your indulgence to me, and beg forgiveness of all that I have done ill, and all that I have omitted to do well. God grant you his Holy Spirit, and receive you to everlasting happiness, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen. Lord Jesus receive your spirit. Amen.

I am, dear, dear mother,

Your dutiful son,

SAM. JOHNSON.

## LORD CHESTERFIELD, 1694-1773

*The history of human nature has nothing more curious than the fanatical earnestness with which Lord Chesterfield tried to implant in his illegitimate son, Philip Stanhope (1732-1768), that ease of manner and airy grace which were inevitably blighted by the intensity with which they were inculcated. In no circumstances would Philip Stanhope have been an ornament to a drawing-room, but under the third degree treatment of his frenzied father his tendency to boorishness was unnaturally stimulated. It is interesting to notice that Chesterfield himself lost his manners and self-possession in his ungovernable desire to promote them in his son. His remark to Monsieur Clairaut, who had recently been to Lapland for the honourable purpose of measuring a degree of the meridian, was more ill-bred than witty.*

*The letters to his godson and heir were written two or three years before the death of Philip Stanhope, of whom he had by now despaired.*

### ADVICE TO A SON

#### 1

1747.

THERE is another kind of nominal friendship among young people which is warm for the time, but, by good luck, of short duration. This friendship is hastily produced by their being accidentally thrown together, and pursuing the same course of riot and debauchery. A fine friendship, truly! and well cemented by drunkenness and lewdness. It should rather be called a conspiracy against morals and good manners, and be punished as such by the civil magistrate.

1748.

I have now but one anxiety left which is, concerning you. I would have you be, what I know nobody is, perfect. As that is impossible, I would have you as near perfection as possible. I know nobody in a fairer way towards it than yourself, if you please. Never were so much pains taken for anybody's education as for yours, and never had anybody those opportunities of knowledge and improvement which you have had, and still have. I hope, I wish, I doubt, and I fear alternately.

1748.

Your very bad enunciation runs so much in my head, and gives me such real concern, that it will be the subject of this, and I believe of many more letters. I

you and myself that I was informed time to prevent it; and shall ever

DEAR HONOURED After you will I am sure think

Neither your igned to Sir Charles Williams for it fit for me to say ood God! if this ungraceful and mother, and I believe speaking had, either by your I thank you for your income habitual to you, as in a ness of all that I have ould have been, what a figure omitted to do well. God mpany or in a public assembly! receive you to everlasting sake. Amen. Lord Jesus re<sup>4</sup>

I am, dear

1748.

Your<sup>5</sup>ess increases in proportion  
our taking your part upon

the great stage of the world. The audience will form their opinion of you upon your first appearance (making the proper allowance for your inexperience), and so far it will be final, that, though it may vary as to the degree, it will never totally change. This consideration excites that restless attention which I am constantly examining how I can best contribute to the perfection of that character in which the least spot or blemish would give me more real concern than I am now capable of feeling upon any other account whatsoever.

## 5

1750.

People easily pardon in young men the common irregularities of the senses; but they do not forgive the least vice of the heart. The heart never grows better by age; I fear rather worse, always harder. . . . Let no conversation, no example, no fashion, no *bon mot*, no silly desire of seeming to be above, what most knaves and many fools call prejudices, ever tempt you to avow, excuse, extenuate, or laugh at the least breach of morality; but shew upon all occasions, and take all occasions to shew, a detestation and abhorrence of it. . . . All this relates, as you easily judge, to the vices of the heart, such as lying, fraud, envy, malice, detraction, etc.; and I do not extend it to the little frailties of youth, flowing from high spirits and warm blood. It would ill become you, at your age, to declaim against them, and sententially censure a gallantry, an accidental excess of the table, a frolic, an inadvertency; no, keep as free from

## PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

Quelles manières, quelles graces, quel art de plaire! Nature, thank God, has given you all the powers necessary; and if she has not yet, I hope in God she will give you the will of exercising them.

### ADVICE TO A GODSON

*(Letters written to Philip Stanhope, his godson and distant cousin, who became his heir and successor to the Earldom.)*

#### I

1765.

. . . I shall, then, for the future, write you a series of letters, which I desire you will read twice over, and keep by you, upon the duty, the utility, and the means of pleasing. . . .

#### 2

1765.

MY DEAR LITTLE BOY,

. . . Women stamp the character, fashionable or unfashionable, of all young men at their first appearance in the world. Bribe them with minute attentions, good-breeding, and flattery. . . . Young men are too apt to show a dislike, not to say an aversion and contempt, for ugly and old women, which is both impolitic and injudicious . . . the ugly and the old, having the least to do themselves, are jealous of being despised, and never forgive it; and I could suppose cases, in which you would desire their friendship, or at least their neutrality. . . .

*(Undated.)*

. . . Carefully avoid all affectations of body or mind. It is a very true and a very trite observation that no man is ridiculous for being what he really is, but for affecting to be what he is not. No man is awkward by nature, but by affecting to be genteel. I have known many a man of common sense pass generally for a fool, because he affected a degree of wit that God had denied him. . . . I shall now for a time suspend the course of these Letters; but as the subject is inexhaustible, I shall occasionally resume it. In the meantime, believe, that a man, who does not generally please is nobody; and that a constant endeavour to please, will infallibly please to a certain degree at least.

## JOHN WILKES, 1727-1797

*Wilkes, as his letters show, was devoted to his daughter, in whose society he took a holiday from his usual ribaldry. The advantage to a father of leading a thoroughly dissolute life is that the society of his daughter provides a welcome change of atmosphere.*

### JOHN AND POLLY WILKES

#### I

*April 1778.*

MY DEAR, AMIABLE POLLY,

I approve everything you do and say, and you judged about the bed in my room with your usual propriety and justice. I thank you for your kind attention to such an object, and, indeed, to every thing in which my comfort and pleasure are concerned. The greatest blessing which Heaven can bestow on any man, is a daughter like you—unless, indeed, it be the favoured mortal who can call you his by a still closer connexion, and be perpetuated by another resemblance of yourself and him; which would complete my happiness, as a father.

. . . I sent you yesterday some most delicious Welsh mutton and a cheese, which must be kept four days after its arrival.

I beg you to accept the enclosed piece of thin paper. If it had been adequate to your merit, the figures would have been 10,000,000 sterling: but we poor patriots have little to give except wishes; but to you they come warm from the heart, which is your empire.

JOHN AND POLLY WILKES

2

*April 1778.*

POLLY, DEAR, SWEET POLLY,

I have got a new coat, and it is all blue, and it has a fine gold edging, and I have a fine silk waistcoat, and it is all ribbed, and is blue, and has likewise a gold edging, and I have small-clothes all blue, and fine mother-of-pearl buttons, in every one of which you might see your pretty face. Now I intend to go to Ranelagh, with you, in this same fine waistcoat and coat, but then you must have a new gown, or all the fine folks will jeer me; therefore, as I am preparing for my return, you must call at Mr. Redhead's, and have a fine new gown made immediately, and then I will go with you the first day you choose.

3

*December 1779.*

The post is just arrived, dear Polly, and has not given me the pleasure of any letter from you, so that I suspect the fate of some of mine.

. . . I enclose you a bit of thin paper, with the picture of Britannia, who looks no where so cheerful as in that little corner.

4

*July 12, 1795.*

I thank my dearest Polly for her two letters, and the little billet, which came safe with the parcel yesterday.

I rejoice that you continue well in these raw, pestiferous



PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

dog-days which make all nature shiver and shrink from the cold eastern blasts.

. . . The lurking fever, which at intervals has attacked me for some months, does not quite desert his old quarters, but is less frequent and violent. I will not, however, complain, for I ought to remember that *my May of life is fallen into the scar and yellow leaf.*

## CHARLES JAMES FOX, 1749-1806

*Lord Holland and Charles James Fox form an interesting contrast with Canon and Samuel Butler. No doubt there is a happy mean.*

*The extracts given below are from George Otto Trevelyan's "History of the Early Life of Charles James Fox."*

### FATHER AND SON

#### I

... HIS father worshipped him from the very first.

"DEAR CAROLINE," he writes in March 1752, "send me word by the bearer how my dear Charles does. Send John Walker to-morrow morning with another account, for I propose shooting, and not being in till three or four, I can do nothing in the anxiety of not hearing of him." On another occasion Henry Fox replies to a complaint that he was too much absorbed in politics to please so loving a wife, and so fond a mother. "I am very sorry to hear of poor dear Thumb's being so bad in his cough. For God's sake have the greatest attention for him. If he is ill, you will see whether my state affairs make me forget domestic affection or not. But I pray God no trial of that kind may ever happen to me."

#### 2

"I got to Holland House," wrote Fox, "last night at seven; found all the boys well; but, to say the truth, took most notice of Charles. I never saw him better or

more merry. Harry was just gone to bed and fast asleep. I saw him this morning, when he entered into the conversation very much by sign, but does not speak a word."

## 3

"I dined at home to-day tête-à-tête with Charles (aged three), intending to do business; but he has found me pleasanter employment. I grow immoderately fond of him."

## 4

In 1756, Charles (aged seven) had gone as usual to the theatre. "He says," wrote Fox to Lady Caroline, "he loves you as well indeed, but sticks to it that you are not so handsome as I am, and therefore that he had rather be like me; and he was displeased this morning when Miss Bellamy found out, as I always do, his great resemblance to you."

. . . "Charles is perfectly well, and Mrs. Farmer is therefore sorry that "Alexander the Great" was acted to-night, because she wished him two or three days of confirmed health before he ventured. But he is gone to eat biscuit there for supper, and to come the moment the play is over to take his rhubarb. Charles is now in perfect health and spirits as it is possible for any animal to be. He is all life, spirit, motion, and good humour. He says I look like a villain though; and is sure everybody in the House of Commons, that don't know me, must take me for such."

## 5

"Let nothing be done to break his spirit," Lord Holland used to say. "The world will do that business fast enough." The impression left by the father's subservience to all the child's whims and fancies is preserved in many well-known anecdotes. . . . The shortest, and best, of these stories is to the effect that Charles declared his intention to destroy a watch. "Well!" said Lord Holland: "if you must, I suppose you must."

## 6

"I beg to know," Fox wrote in 1756, "what disposition Charles comes up in, and which you would have me encourage; his going immediately to Wandsworth, or staying till he can go to Eton."

"I was going to dine tête-à-tête with Charles when I was sent for to the House of Commons. It proved a false alarm, and only prevented my dining with him, but not playing at cricket with him and Peter. He is infinitely engaging, and clever, and pretty. He coughs a little, and is hot. Would it not be best to persuade him to go to Wandsworth for his health?"

## 7

In the spring of 1763 . . . harassed by his dispute with Lord Shelburne, and not unwilling to withdraw himself and his new title for a time from the notice of his countrymen, he (Holland) could think of no better diversion than to take Charles from his books, and

## PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

convey him to the Continent on a round of idleness and dissipation. At Spa his amusement was to send his son every night to the gaming-table with a pocketful of gold; and (if family tradition may be trusted where it tells against family credit), the parent took not a little pains to contrive that the boy should leave France a finished rake.

### LORD SHELBURNE ON LORD HOLLAND

He educated his children without the least regard to morality, and with such extravagant vulgar indulgence that the great change, which has taken place among our youth, has been dated from the time of his son's going to Eton.

## EDWARD GIBBON, 1737-1794

*"The maternal office," as Gibbon calls it, was performed for Gibbon by an aunt. The parallel instances of Robert Burns, Dickens's children, Anthony Trollope, and Stevenson show that in life, as opposed to fiction, children often see more of an aunt or a nurse than of their own mothers, whose time is taken up by the cares of a household and by bearing more children.*

*Gibbon's famous "I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son" is somewhat discounted by his telling the reader that his father received him on his return from Lausanne "as a man and a friend; all constraint was banished at our first interview, and we ever afterwards continued on the same terms of easy and equal politeness." If this were so, why did he not tell his father over the port that he had just become engaged to a charming girl at Lausanne, and then pass on to some other topic?*

### THE MATERNAL OFFICE

I WAS born at Putney, in the county of Surrey, the 27th of April, in the year 1737; the first child of the marriage of Edward Gibbon, Esq., and of Judith Porten. The union to which I owe my birth was a marriage of inclination and esteem. . . .

The death of a newborn child before that of its parents may seem an unnatural, but it is a strictly probable, event; since of any given number the greater part are extinguished before their ninth year. . . . Without accusing the profuse waste or imperfect workmanship of Nature, I shall only observe that this unfavourable chance was multiplied against my infant existence. So feeble was my constitution, so precarious my life, that, in the baptism of each of my brothers, my father's

prudence successively repeated my Christian name of Edward, that, in case of the departure of the eldest son, this patronymic appellation might still be perpetuated in the family.

To preserve and to rear so frail a being, the most tender assiduity was scarcely sufficient; and my mother's attention was somewhat diverted by her frequent pregnancies, by an exclusive passion for her husband, and by the dissipation of the world, in which his taste and authority obliged her to mingle. But the maternal office was supplied by my aunt, Mrs. Catherine Porten, at whose name I feel a tear of gratitude trickling down my cheek. A life of celibacy transferred her vacant affection to her sister's first child: my weakness excited her pity; her attachment was fortified by labour and success; and if there be any, as I trust there are some, who rejoice that I live, to that dear and excellent woman they must hold themselves indebted. Many anxious and solitary days did she consume in the patient trial of every mode of relief and amusement. Many wakeful nights did she sit by my bedside in trembling expectation that each hour would be my last. Of the various and frequent disorders of my childhood, my own recollection is dark; nor do I wish to expatiate on so disgusting a topic.

#### LOVER AND SON

At Cressy and Lausanne I indulged my dream of felicity, but on my return to England I soon discovered that my father would not hear of this strange alliance, and that without his consent I was myself destitute and

helpless. After a painful struggle I yielded to my fate: I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son; my wound was insensibly healed by time, absence, and the habits of a new life. My cure was accelerated by a faithful report of the tranquillity and cheerfulness of the lady herself, and my love subsided in friendship and esteem.

### AN AMIABLE AND DESERVING WOMAN

The domestic discipline of our ancestors has been relaxed by the philosophy and softness of the age; and if my father remembered that he had trembled before a stern parent, it was only to adopt with his own son an opposite mode of behaviour. He received me as a man and a friend; all constraint was banished at our first interview, and we ever afterwards continued on the same terms of easy and equal politeness.

. . . During my absence he had married his second wife, Miss Dorothea Patton, who was introduced to me with the most unfavourable prejudice. I considered his second marriage as an act of displeasure, and I was disposed to hate the rival of my mother. But the injustice was in my own fancy, and the imaginary monster was an amiable and deserving woman. . . . After some reserve on my side, our minds associated in confidence and friendship; and as Mrs. Gibbon had neither children nor the hopes of children, we more easily adopted the tender names and genuine characters of mother and son.



## JAMES BOSWELL, 1740-1795

*The aim of Boswell's letters to Sir David Dalrymple and to Andrew Mitchell, ambassador at Berlin, was, as is indeed very obvious, to persuade them to persuade Boswell's father that he could allow his son to wander unchaperoned about the Continent without any uneasiness as to the effect on Boswell's morals. There is no reason to believe that Sir David and Mr. Andrew Mitchell succeeded in, or even seriously attempted, this task. In his correspondence with W. T. Temple, who, though a clergyman, was Boswell's closest friend, Boswell's view of himself as the modern St. Paul is less stressed—"I think I may promise this much . . . to be a man of knowledge and prudence as far as I can."*

### TO SIR DAVID DALRYMPLE

May 21, 1763.

. . . YOU must know seriously that I am a good deal uneasy at present. My father is far from being pleased with me. We are really on bad terms, which is a most disagreeable thing. He is bent on my returning to Scotland; and following the plan that he did. I am unsettled and roving, and would choose to drive about from one thing to another, *abnormis sapiens*, if it be possible to be so. I have a most independent spirit. I cannot bear control, nor to hang on like a young *Laird*. I assure you I have a sincere regard and affection for my father, and am anxious to make him easy. I wish from my soul, Sir David, that you would use your good offices between us. It is not from the fear of being disinherited (which he threatens) that I am anxious. I am thoughtless enough not to mind that. But my affection for him makes

JAMES BOSWELL

me very unhappy at the thoughts of offending him. I beg you may talk with him, and try to make matters easy. It will be a most humane office. Tell him to have patience with me for a year or two, and I may be what he pleases.

2

TO SIR DAVID DALRYMPLE

*June 25, 1763.*

. . . I beg to have your directions as to what books and other things I should carry with me; and in what manner I should live at Utrecht. . . . I hope my father has never thought of sending a travelling governour (as the phrase is) with me. That is surely a very bad plan for me, and what I could scarcely agree to. Pray keep him from thinking of that. But I suppose I need fear no such thing, as he would surely have mentioned it to me. If I do not act properly by myself, I never will when in leading strings. I fancy correspondence between Holland and Britain will be easy and frequent. This is a circumstance of some consequence. My father says nothing of the allowance which he intends to give me. Please talk to him of that. I should like something fixed, as it learns a young man to live according to his income.

3

TO W. T. TEMPLE

*July 15, 1763.*

I have had a long letter from my father, full of affection and good counsel. Honest man! he is now very

## FANNY BURNEY, 1752-1840

*Fanny Burney was one of the most popular novelists of the day when she accepted a position as lady-in-waiting at the Court of George III. In her diary she implies that it was chiefly to oblige her father, Dr. Burney, that she took this position, but she was an adept at playing the ingenuous young person, and is not entitled to any great sympathy for the martyrdom she endured.*

### FANNY GOES TO COURT

HER MAJESTY proposed giving me apartments in the palace; making me belong to the table of Mrs. Schwollenberg, with whom all her own visitors—bishops, lords, or commons—always dine; keeping me a footman, and settling on me two hundred pounds a year. “And in such a situation,” he<sup>1</sup> added, “so respectably offered, not solicited, you may have opportunities of serving your particular friends—especially your father—such as scarce any other could afford you.”

I have now to add that the zealous Mr. Smelt is just returned from Windsor, whither he went again to talk the matter over with her Majesty. What passed I know not—but the result is, that she has desired an interview with me herself; it is to take place next Monday, at Windsor. I now see the end—I see it next to inevitable. I can suggest nothing upon earth that I dare say for myself, in an audience so generously meant. I cannot even to my father utter my reluctance,—I see him so

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Smelt, a Court official.

FANNY BURNEY

much delighted at the prospect of an establishment he looks upon as so honourable. But for the Queen's own word *permanent*,—but for her declared desire to attach me entirely to herself and family,—I should share in his pleasure; but what can make *me* amends for all I shall forfeit? But I must do the best I can.

JOURNEY TO WINDSOR

July 1786.

Between nine and ten o'clock we set off. We changed carriage in Queen Ann Street, and Mrs. Ord conveyed us thus to Windsor. With a struggling heart, I kept myself tolerably tranquil during the little journey. My dear father was quite happy, and Mrs. Ord felt the joy of a mother in relinquishing me to the protection of a Queen so universally revered. Had I been in better spirits, their ecstasy would have been unbounded; but alas!—what I was approaching was not in my mind; what I was leaving had taken possession of it solely.

. . . I was now on the point of entering—probably for ever—into an entire new way of life, and of foregoing by it all my most favourite schemes, and every dear expectation my fancy had ever indulged of happiness adapted to its taste—as now all was to be given up—I could disguise my trepidation no longer—indeed I never had disguised, I had only forborne proclaiming it. But my dear father now, sweet soul! felt it all, as I held by his arm, without power to say one word, but that if he did not hurry along I should drop by the way. I heard in his kind voice that he was now really alarmed; he

would have slackened his pace, or have made me stop to breathe; but I could not; my breath seemed gone, and I could only hasten with all my might, lest my strength should go too.

Not only to the sweet Queen, but to myself let me here do justice, in declaring that though I entered her presence with a heart filled with everything but herself, I quitted it with sensations much softened. The condescension of her efforts to quiet me, and the elegance of her receiving me thus, as a visitor, without naming to me a single direction, without even the most distant hint of business struck me to show so much delicacy, as well as graciousness, that I quitted her with a very deep sense of her goodness, and a very strong conviction that she merited every exertion on my part to deserve it.

Mrs. Schwellenberg left me at the room door, where my dear father was still waiting for me, too anxious to depart till he again saw me.

We spent a short time together, in which I assured him I would from that moment take all the happiness in my power, and banish all the regret. I told him how gratifying had been my reception, and I omitted nothing I could think of to remove the uneasiness that this day seemed first to awaken in him. Thank God! I had the fullest success; his hopes and gay expectations were all within call, and they ran back at the first beckoning.

. . . Now all was finally settled, to borrow my own words, I needed no monitor to tell me it would be foolish, useless, even wicked not to reconcile myself to my destiny.

## A CONFERENCE WITH HER FATHER

. . . This led to much interesting discussion and to many confessions and explanations on my part, never made before; which induced him [Fanny's father] to enter more fully into the whole of the situation, and its circumstances, than he had ever yet had the leisure or the spirits to do; and he repeated sundry speeches of discontent at my seclusion from the world.

All this encouraged me to much detail: I spoke my high and constant veneration for my Royal mistress, her merits, her virtues, her condescension, and her even peculiar kindness towards me. But I owned the species of life distasteful to me; I was lost to all private comfort, dead to all domestic endearment; I was worn with want of rest, and fatigued with laborious watchfulness and attendance. My time was devoted to official duties; and all that in life was dearest to me—my friends, my chosen society, my best affections—lived now in my mind only by recollection, and rested upon that with nothing but bitter regret. With relations the most deservedly dear, with friends of almost unequalled goodness, I lived like an orphan—like one who had no natural ties, and must make her way as she could by those that were factitious.

. . . The silence of my dearest father now silencing myself, I turned to look at him; but how was I struck to see his honoured head bowed down almost into his bosom with dejection and discomfort! We were both perfectly still a few moments; but when he raised his head I could hardly keep my seat, to see his eyes filled with tears! "I have long," he cried, "been uneasy,

though I have not spoken; . . . but . . . if you wish to resign—my house, my purse, my arms, shall be open to receive you back!”

The emotion of my whole heart at this speech—this sweet, this generous speech—oh, my dear friends, I need not say it!

We were mutually forced to break up our conference. I could only instantly accept his paternal offer, and tell him it was my guardian angel, it was Providence in its own benignity, that inspired him with such goodness. I begged him to love the day in which he had given me such comfort, and assured him it would rest upon my heart with grateful pleasure till it ceased to beat.

He promised to drink tea with me before I left town, and settle all our proceedings. I acknowledged my intention to have ventured to solicit this very permission of resigning. “But I,” cried he, smiling with the sweetest kindness, “have spoken first myself.”

What a joy to me, what a relief, this very circumstance! it will always lighten any evil that may, unhappily, follow this proposed step.

### FANNY RESIGNS

I wrote the proposal to my poor father (a suggestion made by Mrs Schwollenberg, that Fanny Burney should take a six weeks' holiday, and withdraw her resignation of her post at court). I received, by return of post, the most truly tender letter he ever wrote me. He returns thanks for the clemency with which my melancholy memorial (offer of resignation) has been received, and is

truly sensible of the high honour shown me in the new proposition; but he sees my health so impaired, my strength so decayed, my whole frame so nearly demolished, that he apprehends anything short of a permanent resignation, that would ensure lasting rest and recruit, might prove fatal.

. . . A scene almost horrible ensued, when I told Cerbera the offer was declined. She was too much enraged for disguise, and uttered the most furious expressions of indignant contempt at our proceedings. I am sure she would gladly have confined us both in the Bastile, had England such a misery, as a fit place to bring us to ourselves, from a daring so outrageous against imperial wishes.



## WILLIAM COWPER, 1731-1800

Cowper was fifty-nine when he wrote his famous poem on his mother's portrait, which had been sent to him from Norfolk by his cousin, Ann Bodham.

*A few years earlier he said: "I can truly say that not a week passes, perhaps I might with equal veracity say a day, in which I do not think of her."*

### ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE

OH that those lips had language! Life has pass'd  
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.  
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,  
The same that oft in childhood solaced me;  
Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,  
"Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!"  
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes  
(Blest be the art that can immortalize,  
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim  
To quench it) here shines on me still the same . . .  
My mother! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,  
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?  
Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,  
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?  
Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss;  
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—  
Ah, that maternal smile! it answers "Yes."  
I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,  
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,  
And, turning from my nursery windows, drew  
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu! . . .

WILLIAM COWPER

Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,  
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.  
What ardently I wish'd, I long believed,  
And, disappointed still, was still deceived;  
By expectation every day beguiled,  
Dupe of to-morrow even from a child.  
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,  
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,  
I learn'd at last submission to my lot,  
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.  
Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,  
Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;  
And where the gardener Robin, day by day,  
Drew me to school along the public way,  
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapp'd  
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet capp'd,  
'Tis now become a history little known,  
That once we call'd the pastoral house our own.  
Short-lived possession! But the record fair,  
That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,  
Still outlives many a storm; that has effaced  
A thousand other themes less deeply traced.  
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,  
That thou mightst know me safe and warmly  
laid;  
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,  
The biscuit, or confectionary plum;  
The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestow'd  
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glow'd:  
All this, and more endearing still than all,  
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,

Ne'er roughen'd by those cataracts and breaks,  
 That humour interposed too often makes; . . .  
 Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,  
 When playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,  
 The violet, the pink, and jessamine,  
 I prick'd them into paper with a pin  
 (And thou wast happier than myself the while,  
 Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head, and smile),  
 Could those few pleasant days again appear,  
 Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here?  
 I would not trust my heart—the dear delight  
 Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.  
 But no—what here we call our life is such,  
 So little to be loved, and thou so much,  
 That I should ill requite thee to constrain  
 Thy unbound spirit into bonds again. . . .  
 And now, farewell—Time unrevoked has run  
 His wonted course, yet what I wish'd is done.  
 By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,  
 I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again;  
 To have renew'd the joys that once were mine,  
 Without the sin of violating thine;  
 And while the wings of fancy still are free,  
 And I can view this mimic show of thee,  
 Time has but half succeeded in his theft—  
 Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

## ANNA SEWARD, 1747-1809

*Anna Seward's letters about her father are very touching, in spite of her quaintly luxuriant style. "The Swan of Lichfield" was an exceptionally intelligent woman, and has been unfairly treated by uncritical admirers of Johnson, whom Anna regarded with mixed feelings, describing him after his death as "the late stupendous but frail Dr. Johnson," the "frail" having a moral not a physical significance.*

### AN AGED NURSLING

#### I

LICHFIELD, March 20, 1787.

RESPONDENT to your kind inquiries, I have the pleasure to tell you, that my dearest father, though weaker than ever in his limbs, and amidst the fast-fading powers of memory, has had no relapse since his dreadful epileptic seizures in December; while his affection for me seems to increase as the other energies of his mind subside. When I administer his food, his wine, and even his medicines, which indeed are few, cordial, and palatable, he looks at me with ineffable tenderness; and with an emphatic, though weak voice, "thank you, my dear child, my darling, my blessing"; and not seldom he calls me "the light of his eyes." The sensations of melting fondness which such expressions awaken in my bosom, are of unutterable pleasure. But, alas! soon or late, we generally pay an high price for whatever has been cordial to our spirits, and sweet to our hearts. This augmented tenderness, from a parent always affectionate,

PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

—O! how will it embitter the parting hour, which I must consider as perpetually impending!

2

LICHFIELD, *July 19, 1787.*

After the delight of passing a month with you, dear Sophia, amid your classic and lovely environs, you will be glad that I found my beloved, my aged nursling, as well as when we separated. I must ever feel a trembling gratitude to Heaven, that none of those dire attacks, to which his feeble frame has long been subject, assailed him when I was so distant. You saw how my anxiety to receive intelligence of his safety, from day to day, hurried my spirits, shook my nerves, and interrupted the dear satisfaction of finding myself in such society. Upon so long an absence I never more will venture till the hour of everlasting absence. For an existence so feeble and deprived, it is perhaps a weakness to dread that hour so very passionately; yet, O! we may have more friends than one, but we have *only* one father.

*(Letters to her friend, Miss Weston.)*

## THE EDGEWORTHS

*The Edgeworths, a remarkable Anglo-Irish family, the most famous member of which was the novelist, Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849), settled in Ireland in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.*

*The first of the family to write memoirs was Richard Edgeworth, son of the Francis Edgeworth who figures below as the recipient of two heated letters from his mother. The second and more virulent of these letters was, according to Richard Edgeworth, written by Francis's brother, William, though sent in Lady Edgeworth's name. "She had," Richard Edgeworth writes, "two younger sons and two daughters, who were much inclined to be too expensive and who took great pains to irritate her with her eldest son, for no other reason that I could ever learn, but because he refused to give them portions which he was not bound to do either by the laws of God or man." In family disputes over property, the person in possession too readily convinces himself that whatever he can stick to by the laws of man, he is entitled to stick to also by the laws of God. Francis, however, seems to have been improvident, not stingy, and genuinely incapable of coping with the intemperate demands of his mother and brothers.*

*Later in the eighteenth century, under the skilful management of Richard's son, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, the family fortunes improved. Richard Lovell was the father of the novelist, and was himself quite out of the common. Among other distinctive achievements he married four times. The wife commemorated in the letter quoted below was his second. Elsewhere he gives an account, less stilted than in the letter to Maria, of his feelings after her death. "I spent the night before the funeral beside her coffin. The last look! How often, I thought, that I had taken the last look! What a variety of recollections and ideas passed*

## PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

*through my mind during this night. There was a clock in the room. I observed that it was four o'clock. I was standing on the hearth, not leaning against anything, and in that position I suddenly fell fast asleep, and though I slept but five minutes it seemed to me hours. The day began to dawn. I opened the window . . . a strange sense of life and renewed vigour came over all my senses."*

*He helped his daughter with her novels, and the urgency with which, on his deathbed, he impressed on her the need to fight against her tendency to give money to those who needed it supports the view that he had a damping effect on her humanity and imagination.*

## LADY EDGEWORTH AND HER SON FRANCIS (FRANK)

### ADVICE TO AN IRISH LANDOWNER

*March 9, 1702.*

DEAR FRANK,

As soon as you get this I charge you as you value my blessing, go into your closet and say your prayers and find out what is to be done after. I am sure you will find God doth not approve of your usage of me, and I hope your eyes will be enlightened that you may see your sad case while you wrong me; and I pray God mend you; and for your own sake do so no more, but send me what you promised me, and I pray God bless your basket and your store. . . . If I were a stranger to Ireland, it may be I might be imposed upon to believe that plenty would ruin the kingdom. But I know better things. Go into the country in God's name, live on your estate, take

your tenant's cattle at a market rate and give them sixpence or a shilling more, and get their blessing. Also set up a malt-house and take the barley at more than market rate. And if you set up a tan-yard, 'twill do well, and twice a year four times double your money. But to think to live on an Irish estate as our lazy English gentry do—indeed, Frank, it will not do. Were I as able as I was when in Ireland, I would make an estate instead of selling any.

## NO ROOM FOR MALICE

*September 21, 1703.*

I will not curse you for your inexpressible neglect of duty, nature, and justice, but with the greatest agonies of an oppressed soul I implore God to avenge my sufferings on that impious antidote that expels those principles from your bosom and implants fraud, barbarism, and a sered conscience. How in the name of Jesus do you imagine I can support those orphans whose just curses cater up the dishes of your luxury, and whose bread raises the pampered scandal to a butt for satire? Good God! that a son of mine should make his actions such a libel on him that there is no room for malice. If you have answered my £60 bills, let me know it, that I may be plagued no more about 'em, and on receipt of this send me the £36 remaining due for last May, or else in plain terms confess you designed our bargain a cheat. I desire your answer that, if you will be just, I may be quiet, and, if not, I may lay the sufferings of myself and family before the parliament.



## PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

### A SON'S REGRET

February 8, 1708.

. . . Pray pay no more visits to my mother: her kindness is more for her dogs than her children; I'm sorry she is my mother.

*(Francis Edgeworth to his wife.)*

### RICHARD LOVELL EDGEWORTH

#### INSECTICIDE

I was now obliged [by his anxious mother] to take a course of physic twice a year, with nine days' potions of small beer and rhubarb, to fortify my stomach and to kill imaginary worms. I was muffled up whenever I was permitted to ride a mile or two on horseback before the coachman; my feet never brushed the dew, nor was my head ever exposed to the wind or sun. Fortunately my mother's knowledge of the human mind far exceeded her skill in medicine.

### AN APPROVING HUSBAND

MY DEAR DAUGHTER,

At six o'clock on Thursday morning your excellent mother expired in my arms. She now lies dead beside me, and I know I am doing what would give her pleasure, if she were capable of feeling anything, by writing to you at this time to fix her excellent image in your mind.

As you grow older and become acquainted with more

of my friends, you will hear from every mouth the most exalted character of your incomparable mother. You will be convinced by your own reflections on her conduct, that she fulfilled the part of a mother towards you and towards your sisters, without partiality towards her own, or servile indulgence towards mine. Her heart, conscious of rectitude, was above the fear of raising suspicions to her disadvantage in the mind of your father, or in the minds of your relations. . . .

Continue, my dear daughter, the desire which you feel of becoming amiable, prudent, and of USE. The ornamental parts of a character with such an understanding as yours necessarily ensue; but true judgment and sagacity in the choice of friends, and the regulation of your behaviour, can be only had from reflection and from being thoroughly convinced of what experience teaches, in general, too late, that to be happy we must be good.

God bless you, and make you ambitious of that valuable praise which the amiable character of your dear mother forces from the virtuous and the wise. My writing to you in my present situation will, my dearest daughter, be remembered by you as the strongest proof of the love of your approving father,

RICHARD LOVELL EDGEWORTH.

*(Letter to Maria Edgeworth on her stepmother's death.)*

#### A CAUTION AGAINST MEANNESS

"While I live I know you [Maria] will not be extravagant, as long as you have over you the strong mind of a

father whom you love, I might almost say adore. You listen sometimes to reason, but imagination can only be impressed by imagination. Call Fanny! . . . My dear and prudent daughter Fanny, I have called you to listen to something of importance I am saying to Maria. When I die, you, Maria, will be left in excellent circumstances. You will be rich. You have many brothers and sisters and friends, who may each in their turn have claims upon you. You will want to give away your fortune, first to one, then to another—you will give the same sum twice over and forget you have given it, and wonder you have it not still. One of your sisters is going to be married! to a captain of dragoons. He wants a thousand pounds to buy a commission. Oh! you'll give it. She is married—has children—is in distress—there's an end of your thousand—or a house is to be bought and like to be sold again for half its value, and there's an end of your gift. Therefore I entreat that you will never, to oblige any human being, part with any of the principal of your fortune. On my dying bed I entreat you not to squander away your property on whoever at the moment you may think may want it. Always have a will and never have the meanness to give any of your relations the hope that you will leave them anything. You are the only one of my children of whom I have anything to beg. My eldest son is wise and economic. My daughter Fanny is prudence itself. My wife—but anything more I could say would weaken the impression."

*(Edgeworth's Death—Recorded by Maria Edgeworth.)*

## ROBERT BURNS, 1759-1796

*The first of the two letters quoted from below was written by Burns to Dr. Moore, a well-to-do author and patron of letters; the second to a lady of some social position, many years older than Burns, who seems to have adopted a rather artificial style in his natural anxiety to give his refined and pious correspondent due satisfaction.*

### A POOR MAN'S SON

1787.

I HAVE not the most distant pretensions to what the pye-coated guardians of escutcheons call, a gentleman. When at Edinburgh last winter, I got acquainted in the *Herald's* Office, and looking through that granary of Honors I there found almost every name in the kingdom; but for me,

My ancient but ignoble blood  
Has crept thro' scoundrels ever since the flood.

Gules, Purpure, Argent, etc., quite disowned me. My Father's rented land of the noble Kieths of Marshal, and had the honor to share their fate. . . . I mention this circumstance because it threw my father on the world at large; where, after many years' wanderings and sojournings, he pickt up a pretty large quantity of observation and experience, to which I am indebted for most of my little pretensions to wisdom. I have met with few who understand "Men, their manners and their ways" equal to him; but stubborn, ungainly integrity, and headlong, ungovernable irascibility are disqualifying circumstances: consequently I was born a very poor man's son. For the first six or seven years of my life, my father was gardiner to a worthy gentleman of small estate in

the neighbourhood of Ayr. Had my father continued in that situation, I must have marched off to be one of the little underlings about a farm-house; but it was his dearest wish and prayer to have it in his power to keep his children under his own eye till they could discern between good and evil; so with the assistance of his generous Master my father ventured on a small farm in his estate.

. . . In my infant and boyish days . . . I owed much to an old Maid of my mother's, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the county of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cantraips, giants, enchanted towers, dragons and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of Poesy; but had so strong an effect on my imagination, that to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp look-out in suspicious places; and though nobody can be more sceptical in these matters than I, yet it often takes an effort of Philosophy to shake off these idle terrors.

. . . My father's generous Master died; the farm proved a ruinous bargain; and, to clench the curse, we fell into the hands of a Factor who sat for the picture I have drawn of one in my Tale of two dogs. My father was advanced in life when he married; I was the eldest of seven children; and he, worn out by early hardship, was unfit for labour. My father's spirit was soon irritated, but not easily broken. . . . We lived very poorly; I was a dextrous Ploughman for my years; and the next eldest

to me was a brother, who could drive the plough very well and help me to thrash. A Novel-Writer might perhaps have viewed these scenes with some satisfaction, but so did not I: my indignation yet boils at the recollection of the scoundrel tyrant's insolent, threatening epistles, which used to set us all in tears.

. . . In my seventeenth year, to give my manners a brush, I went to a country dancing school. My father had an unaccountable antipathy against these meetings; and my going was, what to this hour I repent, in absolute defiance of his commands. My father, as I said before, was the sport of strong passions: from that instance of rebellion he took a kind of dislike to me, which, I believe was one cause of that dissipation which marked my future years. I only say Dissipation, comparative with the strictness and sobriety of Presbyterian country life; for though the will-o'-wisp meteors of thoughtless whim were almost the sole lights of my path, yet early ingrained Piety and Virtue never failed to point me out the line of Innocence.

*(Letter to Dr. Moore.)*

#### REUNION AFTER DEATH

1789.

Can it be possible, that when I resign this frail, feverish being, I shall still find myself in conscious existence? . . . Would to God I as firmly believed it, as I ardently wish it! There I shall meet an aged Parent, now at rest from the many buffetings of an evil world against which he so long and bravely struggled.

*(Letter to Mrs. Dunlop.)*

## ERASMUS DARWIN, 1731-1802

*Erasmus Darwin, from whose life by his descendant Hesketh Pearson the following passages are taken, was the originator of many of the ideas which have shaped the modern world, pre-eminently the idea of Creative Evolution. Although a humane and sensible man, his temper was rather irritable and overbearing, and his use of irony, as appears below, was unfortunate in its effects on his children.*

### HIS SONS

"IF you would not have your children arrogant, conceited, and hypocritical," he [Darwin] says, "do not let them perceive that you are continually watching and attending to them; nor can you keep that perpetual watch without their perceiving it. Inspire them with a disdain of meanness, falsehood, and promise-breaking; but do not try to effect this purpose by precept and declamation, but, as occasion rises, by expressed contempt of such as commit those faults, whether it be themselves or others. Teach them benevolence and industry by your own example, for children are emulous to acquire the habits of advanced life, and attach to them an idea of dignity and importance."

He also declares that "reprimands and even admonitions should always be applied in private, but applause or reward in public." . . . He considers that sympathy with the pains and pleasures of others is the foundation of all our social virtues, that it can best be inculcated by example and the expression of our own sympathy, and that "compassion or sympathy with the pains of others ought also to extend to the brute creation . . . to

destroy even insects wantonly shows an unreflecting mind or a depraved heart." On the other hand he is strongly opposed to mere sentiment: "Children should be taught in their early education to feel for all the remediable evils which they observe in others; but they should at the same time be taught sufficient firmness of mind not entirely to destroy their own happiness by their sympathizing with too great sensibility with the numerous irremediable evils which exist in the present system of the world: as by indulging that kind of melancholy they decrease the sum total of public happiness, which is so far rather reprehensible than commendable."

These are some of his views on the moral education of children. His method of imparting them to his own children was peculiar at that time. He used irony, not the rod, when he wished to correct them; but his irony cut like a whip. He was despotic and frequently contemptuous; and though later on, when his professional struggles were less severe, he showed much affection for them, it is doubtful whether they ever forgot the early effect of his "resistless sarcasms."

His eldest son, Charles, inherited his love of science and not a few of his other characteristics, including his stammer. . . . In his twenty-first year he dissected the brain of a child, cut his finger during the operation, and died as a result of the wound. His father reached Edinburgh before he died, and when it was all over wrote letters to Wedgwood and his youngest son Robert in which he gave vent to the anguish of his mind.

The second son, Erasmus, was unlike his father in



almost every respect. . . . He wanted to take Holy Orders, but his father made caustic remarks relative to the indolence and effeminacy of the clergy, and he became a lawyer. The doctor was not kind to this son. The lad's dreamy, retiring, sensitive spirit shrank from the parent's biting sarcasms, and it is possible he never got over the early suppression of his religious instincts. Eventually he settled in Derby, where he did fairly well. But the keeping of accounts was always a painful business to him, and his affairs gradually became so entangled that one cold and stormy December evening he walked down to the bottom of his garden and flung himself into the river Derwent. His body was not recovered till the following morning.

When the news of his disappearance was brought to his father, the doctor went down to the river and stood there for a long time in great agony of mind. Emma, one of his daughters by his second marriage, tells us what happened when the news was brought next day that the body had been found. "He immediately got up, but staggered so much that Violetta and I begged him to sit down, which he did, and leaned his head upon his hand . . . he was exceedingly agitated, and did not speak for many minutes. His first words were: "I beg you will not, any of you, ask to see your poor brother's corpse"; and upon our assuring him that we had not the least wish to do so, he soon after said that this was the greatest shock he had felt since the death of his poor Charles."

. . . The third son, Robert, who became the father of Charles Darwin, was also sensitive to an abnormal degree; and as a remarkable memory was one of his chief endow-

ERASMUS DARWIN

ments, the doctor's biting tongue and imperious nature left an abiding impression on him. He, too, became a doctor, but hated his profession because it constantly brought suffering before his eyes. His chief pleasure in life was to see people enjoying themselves, and he did his utmost to make everyone round him happy. . . . In spite of his dislike of doctoring, Robert did well and soon had a large practice in and about Shrewsbury.

## THOMAS HOLCROFT, 1745-1809

*Thomas Holcroft's Autobiography, which was uncompleted when he died, was praised by Thomas Moore as one of the best autobiographies in the language. It is written very simply and vividly, especially in the account of his first wanderings with his parents and his experiences as a stable boy at Newmarket. Later in life, Holcroft wrote plays, became an atheist and a revolutionary, and was indicted for high treason in 1794, together with Horne Tooke and Thelwall. Released without trial or pardon, he took to translating French books, and died some years later in great poverty, while trying to complete his autobiography.*

### HIS FATHER

MY father was very fond, and not a little vain, of me. . . . One evening when it was quite dark, daylight having entirely disappeared, and the night being cloudy, he was boasting to a neighbour of my courage; and his companion seeming rather to doubt, my father replied, he would put it immediately to the proof. "Tom," said he, "you must go to the house of Farmer Such-a-one" (I well remember the walk, but not the name of the person), "and ask whether he goes to London to-morrow." I was startled, but durst not dispute his authority, it was too great over me, besides that my vanity to prove my valor was not a little excited. . . .

I knew the way well enough, and proceeded; but it was with many stops, starts, and fears. It may be proper to observe here, that although I could not have been without courage, yet I was really, when a child, exceedingly apprehensive, and full of superstition. When I saw

magpies, it denoted good or ill luck, according as they did or did not cross me. When walking, I pored for pins or rusty nails, which, if they lay in certain directions, foreboded some misfortune. Many such whims possessed my brain. I was therefore not at all free from notions of this kind, on the present occasion. However, I went forward on my errand, humming, whistling, and looking as carefully as I could; now and then making a false step, which helped to relieve me, for it obliged me to attend to the road. When I came to the farm-house, I delivered my message. "Bless me, child," cried the people within, "Have you come, this dark night, all alone?" "Oh yes," I said, assuming an air of self-consequence. "And who sent you?" "My father wanted to know," I replied equivocally. One of them then offered to take me home, but of this I would by no means admit. My whole little stock of vanity was roused, and I hastily scampered out of the house, and was hidden in the dark. . . . At last I got safely home, glad to be rid of my fears, and inwardly not a little elated with my success. "Did you hear or see anybody, Tom," said my father, "as you went or came back?" "No," said I, "it was quite dark, not but I thought once or twice; I did hear something behind me." In fact, it was my father and his companion, who had followed me at a little distance. This, my father, in fondly praising me for my courage, some time after told me.

. . . I cannot tell what my father's employment was, while I and my mother were, what they emphatically called *tramping* the villages, to hawk our pedlary. It may be presumed, however, that it was not very lucrative,

## PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

for he soon after left it, and he and my mother went into the country, hawking their small wares, and dragging me after them. . . . We must have been very poor, however, and hard-driven on this occasion; for . . . I was either encouraged, or commanded, one day to go by myself, from house to house, and beg. . . . I told one story at one house, another at another, and continued to vary my tale just as the suggestions arose: the consequence of which was, that I moved the good country people exceedingly. One called me a poor fatherless child: another exclaimed, what a pity! I had so much sense! a third patted my head, and prayed God to preserve me, that I might make a good man. And most of them contributed either by scraps of meat, farthings, bread and cheese, or other homely offers, to enrich me, and send me away with my pockets loaded. I joyfully brought as much of my stores as I could carry, to the place of rendezvous my parents had appointed, where I astonished them by again reciting the false tales I had so readily invented. My father, whose passions were easily moved, felt no little conflict of mind as I proceeded. I can now, in imagination, see the working of his features. "God bless the boy! I never heard the like!" Then, turning to my mother, he exclaimed with great earnestness: "This must not be! the poor child will become a common-place liar! A hedge-side rogue!—He will learn to pilfer!—Turn a confirmed vagrant!—Go on the highway when he is older, and get hanged. He shall never go on such errands again." How fortunate for me in this respect that I had such a father! He was driven by extreme poverty, restless anxiety, and a brain too

prone to sanguine expectations, into many absurdities, which were but the harbingers of fresh misfortunes: but he had as much integrity and honesty of heart as perhaps any man in the kingdom, who had had no greater advantages. It pleases me now to recollect, that, though I had a consciousness that my talents could keep my parents from want, I had a still stronger sense of the justice of my father's remarks.

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, 1770-1850

*The first of the three extracts dealing with Wordsworth's daughter, Dora, refers to Wordsworth's torments when Dora wished to marry Edward Quillinan. Sir Henry Taylor was one of the numerous worshippers who spoilt Wordsworth. One would not infer from his tone that he was referring to the morbid egotism of an old man unable to reconcile himself to his daughter making a respectable marriage.*

*The second extract shows the sufferings of Wordsworth when his daughter fell ill shortly after her long-delayed marriage; the third his agony when she was dying and his despair afterwards.*

### HIS MOTHER

THE time of my infancy and early boyhood was passed partly at Cockermouth, and partly with my mother's parents at Penrith, where my mother, in the year 1778, died of a decline, brought on by a cold, the consequence of being put, at a friend's house in London, in what used to be called "a best bedroom." My father never recovered his usual cheerfulness of mind after this loss, and died when I was in my fourteenth year, a schoolboy just returned from Hawkshead, whither I had been sent with my elder brother Richard, in my ninth year. I remember my mother only in some few situations, one of which was her pinning a nosegay to my breast when I was going to say the catechism in the church, as was customary before Easter.

I remember also telling her on one week-day that I had been at church, for our school stood in a churchyard, and we had frequent opportunities of seeing what was going on there. The occasion was, a woman doing penance

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

in the church in a white sheet. My mother commended my having been present, expressing the hope that I should remember the circumstance for the rest of my life. "But," said I, "Mama, they did not give me a penny, as I had been told they would." "Oh," said she, recanting her praises, "if that was your motive, you were very properly disappointed."

My last impression was having a glimpse of her on passing the door of her bedroom during her last illness, when she was reclining in her easy-chair. An intimate friend of hers, Miss Hamilton by name, who was used to visit her at Cockermouth, told me that she once said to her, that the only one of her five children about whose future life she was anxious, was William; and he, she said, would be remarkable either for good or for evil. The cause of this was, that I was of a stiff, moody, and violent temper; so much so that I remember going once into the attics of my grandfather's house at Penrith, upon some indignity having been put upon me, with an intention of destroying myself with one of the foils which I knew was kept there. I took the foil in hand, but my heart failed.

## HIS DAUGHTER DORA

### I

The emotions—I may say the throes and agonies of emotion—he underwent, were such as an old man could not have endured without suffering in health, had he not been a very strong old man. But he was like nobody else—old or young. He would pass the night, or most



part of it, in struggles and storms, to the moment of coming down to breakfast; and then, if strangers were present, be as easy and delightful in conversation as if nothing were the matter.

*(Sir Henry Taylor.)*

## 2

Dear Mr. Wordsworth comes forth occasionally to see his old friends, and yesterday morning, when I saw him slowly and sadly approaching by our birch-tree, I hastened to meet him, and found that he would prefer walking with me around our garden boundary to entering the house and encountering a larger party. So we wandered about here, and then I accompanied him to Rydal, and he walked back again with me through the great field, as you can so well picture to yourself. This quiet intercourse gave me an opportunity of seeing how entirely our dear friends are prepared to bow with submission to God's will. No one can tell better than yourself how much they will feel it, for you have had full opportunities of seeing how completely Dora was the joy and sunshine of their lives; but, by her own composure and cheerful submission and willingness to relinquish all earthly hopes and possessions, she is teaching them to bear the greatest sorrow which could have befallen them.

*(Mrs. Thomas Arnold to Crabb Robinson, 1847.)*

## 3

I have heard old Mrs. Tyson, of Rydal, who in her girlhood lived at the farm behind Rydal Mount, and

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

later became a servant in the Wordsworth household, relate that when his daughter lay dying, the aged poet used to come to the farm for whey, and tell them: "You *must* make it; for if you do not my daughter will die before morning"; and she was kept alive for three weeks, Mrs. Tyson said, on whey and wine. . . .

Mrs. Wordsworth urged Robinson not to omit his visit to Rydal this winter, but he found the afflicted father hardly able to bear even his company. James, the faithful servant, proved a better comforter, as Robinson relates in a touching anecdote: "Talked with him about his master's grief. James said: 'It's very sad, sir. He was moaning about her, and said, "Oh, but she was such a bright creature." And I said, "But don't you think, sir, that she is far brighter now than ever she was?" And then master burst into tears.' "

(*J. M. Harper.*)

## WILLIAM HAZLITT, 1778-1830

*Hazlitt is referring in the following passage to one of his own children, whose loss deepened the unhappiness of his marriage to a well-meaning but uncongenial wife.*

### THE DEATH OF AN INFANT SON

I HAVE never seen death but once, and that was in an infant. It is years ago. The look was calm and placid, and the face was fair and firm. It was as if a waxen image had been laid out in the coffin, and strewed with innocent flowers. It was not like death, but more like an image of life! No breath moved the lips, no pulse stirred, no sight or sound would enter those eyes or ears more. While I looked at it, I saw no pain was there; it seemed to smile at the short pang of life which was over: but I could not bear the coffin-lid to be closed—it seemed to stifle me; and still as the nettles wave in a corner of the churchyard over his little grave, the welcome breeze helps to refresh me, and ease the tightness at my breast!

## LORD BYRON, 1788-1824

*The following account of Byron's relations with his mother is taken from Thomas Moore's "Letters and Memorials of Lord Byron, with notices of his life."*

### HIS MOTHER

#### I

HIS mother, without judgement or self-command, alternately spoiled him by self-indulgence, and irritated, or—what was still worse—amused him by her violence. That strong sense of the ridiculous, for which he was afterwards so remarkable, and which showed itself thus early, got the better even of his fear of her; and when Mrs. Byron, who was a short and corpulent person, and rolled considerably in her gait, would, in a rage, endeavour to catch him for the purpose of inflicting punishment, the young urchin, proud of being able to outstrip her in spite of his lameness, would run round the room, laughing like a little Puck, and mocking at all her menaces. In a few anecdotes of his early life, which he related in his *Memoranda*, though the name of his mother was never mentioned but with respect, it was not difficult to perceive that the recollections she had left behind—at least those that had made the deepest impression—were of a painful nature. One of the most striking passages, indeed, in the few pages of that Memoir which related to his early days, was where, in speaking of his own sensitiveness on the subject of his deformed foot, he described the feeling of horror and humiliation that came over him when his mother, in one of her fits of passion, called him “a lame brat.” As all that he had

## PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

felt strongly through life was, in some shape or other, reproduced in his poetry, it was not likely that an expression such as this should fail of being recorded. Accordingly we find, in the opening of his drama, *The Deformed Transformed*,

*Bertha.* Out, hunchback!

*Arnold.* I was born so, mother!

It may be questioned, indeed, whether that whole drama was not indebted for its origin to this single recollection.

### 2

. . . Dr. Glennie [Byron's schoolmaster] even ventured to oppose himself to the privilege, so often abused, of the usual visits on a Saturday; and the scenes which he had to encounter on each new case of refusal were such as would have wearied out the patience of any less zealous and conscientious schoolmaster. Mrs. Byron, whose paroxysms of passion were not, like those of her son, "silent rages," would, on all these occasions, break into such audible fits of temper as it was impossible to keep from reaching the ears of the scholars and the servants; and Dr. Glennie had, one day, the pain of overhearing a schoolfellow of his noble pupil say to him: "Byron, your mother is a fool"; to which the other answered gloomily, "I know it."

### 3

To the boisterousness of his mother he would oppose a civil and, no doubt, provoking silence,—bowing to

her, but the more profoundly the higher her voice rose in the scale. In general, however, when he perceived that a storm was at hand, in flight lay his only safe resource. . . . Poker and tongs, were, it seems, the missiles which Mrs. Byron preferred, and which she, more than once, sent resounding after her fugitive son.

## 4

## BYRON ON HIS MOTHER

16 PICCADILLY, Aug. 9, 1806.

MY DEAR PIGOT,

Many thanks for your amusing narrative of the last proceedings of my *amiable Alecto*, who now begins to feel the effects of her folly. I have just received a penitential epistle, to which, apprehensive of pursuit, I have despatched a moderate answer, with a *kind* of promise to return in a fortnight; this, however (*entre nous*), I never mean to fulfil. Her soft warblings must have delighted her auditors, her higher notes being particularly musical, and on a calm moonlight evening would be heard to great advantage. Had I been present as a spectator, nothing would have pleased me more; but to have come forward as one of the *dramatis personæ*—St. Dominic defend me from such a scene! Seriously, your mother has laid me under great obligations, and you, with the rest of your family, merit my warmest thanks for your connivance at my escape from “Mrs. Byron *furiosa*.”

. . . Here I remain at least a week or ten days; previous

PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

to my departure you shall receive my address, but what it will be I have not determined. My lodgings must be kept secret from Mrs. B. You may present my compliments to her, and say any attempt to pursue me will fail, as I have taken measures to retreat immediately to Portsmouth, on the first intimation of her removal from Southwell. . . .

Aug. 16.

TO MR. PIGOT.

I cannot exactly say with Cæsar, "*Veni, vidi, vici*"; however, the most important part of this laconic account of success applies to my present situation; for though Mrs. Byron took the *trouble* of "coming" and "seeing," yet your humble servant has been the victor. After an obstinate engagement of some hours, in which we suffered considerable damage, from the quickness of the enemy's fire, they at length retired in confusion, leaving behind the artillery, field equipage, and some prisoners: their defeat is decisive for the present campaign. To speak more intelligibly, Mrs. B. returns immediately, but I proceed, with all my laurels, to Worthing, on the Sussex coast; to which place you will address (to be left at the post office) your next epistle.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY, 1792-1822

*After being expelled from Oxford and, at the age of nineteen, marrying Harriet Westbrook, Shelley found himself awkwardly placed with his father, who wished him to apologise to the authorities at Oxford, and was incensed at his marriage. The following letters reveal Shelley's attempts to secure an income from his father without disowning his religious and political principles, both of which were obnoxious to Timothy Shelley.*

*Elizabeth Hitchener, to whom Shelley confides his opinion of "that mistaken man, my father," was referred to by Shelley, a year later, as "an artful, superficial, ugly, hermaphroditical beast of a woman."*

I

TO HIS FATHER, TIMOTHY SHELLEY

April 5, 1811.

MY DEAR FATHER,

As you do me the honour of requesting to hear the determination of my mind as the basis of your future actions, I feel it my duty, although it gives me pain to wound "the sense of duty to your own character, to that of your family, and your feelings as a Christian," decidedly to refuse my assent to both the proposals in your letter, and to affirm that similar refusals will always be the fate of similar requests. With many thanks for your great kindness.

I remain your affectionate, dutiful son,  
PERCY B. SHELLEY.



## 2

## TO HIS FRIEND HOGG

April 29, 1811.

Father is as fierce as a lion again. The other day he was in town. John Grove saw him and succeeded in flattering him into a promise, that he would allow me £200 per annum, and leave me alone.

The *Misery*; for now he has left town, and written to disannul all that he before promised. Gelidum Nemus (Grove) is flattering like a courtier, and will, I conjecture, bring him about again. He wants me to go to Oxford to apologize to the Master, etc. No, of course!

## 3

## TO ELIZABETH HITCHENER, AFTER HIS MARRIAGE

October 10, 1811.

. . . That mistaken man, my father, has refused us money, and commanded that our names should never be mentioned. . . . Sophisticated by falsehood as society is, I had thought that this blind resentment had long ago been banished to the regions of dullness, comedies and farces, or was used merely to augment the difficulties, and consequently the attachment of the hero and heroine of a modern novel. I have written frequently to this thoughtless man, and am now determined to visit him, in order to try the force of truth, tho' I must confess I

consider it nearly as hyperbolical as "music rending the knotted oak. . . ."

4

TO HIS FATHER

*December 1811.*

. . . I have just returned from Greystoke, where I had been invited by the Duke of Norfolk, that he might speak with me of the unhappy differences which some of my actions have occasioned. The result of his advice was that I should write a letter to you. . . .

On my expulsion from Oxford you were so good as to allow me £200 per annum; you also added a promise of my being unrestrained in the exercise of the completest free agency. In consequence of this last I married a young lady whose personal character is unimpeachable. This action (admitting it to be done) in its very nature required dissimulation, much as I may regret that I had descended to employ it. My allowance was then withdrawn. . . . And now let me say that a reconciliation with you is a thing which I very much desire; accept my apologies for the uneasiness which I have occasioned; believe that my wishes to repair any uneasiness is firm and sincere. I regard these family differences as a very great evil, and I much lament that I should in any wise have been instrumental in exciting them.

I hope you will not consider what I am about to say an insulting want of respect or contempt; but I think it my duty to say that however great advantages might

PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

result from such concessions, I can make no promise of concealing my opinions in political or religious matters. . .

5

TO WILLIAM GODWIN

*January 16, 1812.*

You mistake me if you think that I am angry with my father. I have ever been desirous of a reconciliation with him, but the price which he demands for it is a renunciation of my opinions, or, at least, a subjection to conditions which should bind me to act in opposition to their very spirit. It is probable that my father has *acted* for my welfare, but the manner in which he has done so will not allow me to suppose that he has *felt* for it. . . . I never loved my father—it was not from hardness of heart, for I have loved and do love warmly.

6

TO HIS FATHER

*May 4, 1813.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

I once more presume to address you to state to you my sincere desire of being considered worthy of a restoration to the intercourse with yourself and my family which I have forfeited by my follies. Some time since, I stated my feelings on this subject in a letter to the Duke of Norfolk. . . . If, however, I could convince you of the change that has taken place in some of the

most unfavourable traits of my character, and of my willingness to make any concessions that may be judged best for the interest of my family, I flatter myself that there would be little further need of his Grace's interference. . . . My wife unites with me in respectful regards.

7

HIS FATHER TO SHELLEY

*May 26, 1813.*

MY DEAR BOY,

I was sorry to find by the contents of your letter of yesterday (written after the one just quoted) that I was mistaken in the conclusions I drew from your former letter, in which you assured me a change had taken place in some of the most unfavourable traits in your character, as what regards your avowed opinions are in my Judgment the most material parts of Character requiring amendment; and as you now avow there is no change effected in them, I must decline all further Communication, or any Personal Interview, until that shall be effected, and I desire you will consider this as my final answer to anything you may have to offer.

If that Conclusion had not operated on my mind to give this answer, I desire you also to understand that I should not have received any Communication but through His Grace the Duke of Norfolk, as I know his exalted mind will protect me at the moment and with the World.

I beg to return all the usual remembrance.

## 8

## TO THE DUKE OF NORFOLK

*May 28, 1813.*

. . . I sincerely regret that any of your valuable time should have been occupied in the vain and impossible task of reconciling myself and my father. . . . I was prepared to make my father every reasonable concession, but I am not so degraded and miserable a slave as publicly to disavow an opinion which I believe to be true. Every man of common sense must plainly see that a sudden renunciation of sentiments seriously taken up is as unfortunate a test of intellectual uprightness as can possibly be devised. I take the liberty of enclosing my father's letter for your Grace's inspection. . . .

## 9

## HARRIET SHELLEY TO MRS. NUGENT

*June 21, 1813.*

. . . Mr. Shelley has broken off the negotiation, and will have no more to say to his son, because that son will not write to the people of Oxford, and declare his return to Christianity. Did you ever hear of such an old dotard? It seems that so long as he lives, Bysshe must never hope to see or hear anything of his family. This is certainly an unpleasant circumstance, particularly as his mother wishes to see him, and has a great affection for him.

*Godwin, a Utopian philosopher, did not believe in the institution of marriage. He married twice, and when Shelley eloped with his daughter, refused to have anything to do with him, beyond receiving money from him under a name borrowed for the purpose. His revised attitude to Shelley, when the suicide of Shelley's first wife enabled Shelley to marry Godwin's daughter, is given below.*

## I

## SHELLEY TO GODWIN

IN my judgment, neither I, nor your daughter, nor her offspring, ought to receive the treatment which we encounter on every side. It has perpetually appeared to me to have been your especial duty to see that, so far as mankind value your good opinion, we were dealt justly by, and that a young family, innocent and benevolent and united, should not be confounded with prostitutes and seducers. My astonishment, and I will confess when I have been treated with most harshness and cruelty by you, my indignation has been extreme, that, knowing as you do my nature, any considerations should have prevailed on you to have been thus harsh and cruel. I lamented also over my ruined hopes—hopes of all that your genius once taught to expect from your virtue, when I found that for yourself, your family, and your creditors, you would submit to that communication with me which you once rejected and abhorred, and which no pity for my poverty or sufferings, assumed willingly for you, could avail to extort. Do not talk of *forgiveness* again to me, for my blood boils in my veins, and my gall rises

against all that bears the human form, when I think of what I, their benefactor and ardent lover, have endured of enmity and contempt from you and from all mankind.

2

GODWIN TO SHELLEY

I return your cheque, because no consideration can induce me to utter a cheque drawn by you and containing my name. To what purpose make a disclosure of this kind to your banker? I hope you will send a duplicate of it by the post which will reach me on Saturday morning. You may make it payable to Joseph Hume or James Martin, or any other name in the whole directory. I should prefer its being payable to Mr. Hume.

3

SHELLEY'S ACCOUNT OF HIS MARRIAGE TO  
MARY GODWIN

The ceremony, so magical in its effects, was undergone this morning at St. Mildred's Church in the City. Mrs. G. and Mr. G. were both present, and appeared to feel no little satisfaction. Indeed, Godwin throughout has shown the most polished and courteous attentions to me and Mary. He seems to think no kindness too great in compensation for what has passed. I confess I am not entirely deceived by this, though I cannot make my vanity entirely insensible to certain attentions paid in a manner studiously flattering.

## GODWIN'S ACCOUNT

I have not written to you [his brother] for a great while, but now I have a piece of news to tell you that will give you great pleasure. I will not refuse myself the satisfaction of being the vehicle of that pleasure.

I do not know whether you recollect the miscellaneous way in which my family is composed, but at least you perhaps remember that I have but two children of my own; a daughter by my late wife and a son by my present. Were it not that you have a family of your own, and can see by them how little shrubs grow into tall trees, you would hardly imagine that my boy, born the other day, is now fourteen, and that my daughter is between nineteen and twenty. The piece of news I have to tell, however, is that I went to church with this tall girl some little time ago to be married. Her husband is the eldest son of Sir Timothy Shelley, of Field Place, in the county of Sussex, Baronet. So that, according to the vulgar ideas of the world, she is well married, and I have great hopes the young man will make her a good husband. You will wonder, I daresay, how a girl without a penny of fortune should meet with so good a match. But such are the ups and downs of this world.

For my part I care but little, comparatively, about wealth, so that it be her destiny in life to be respectable, virtuous, and contented.



## THOMAS DE QUINCEY, 1785-1859

The following extract is from "*Confessions of an English Opium Eater*," and refers to de Quincey's reception by his mother after he had run away from a school in Wales. De Quincey, like Coleridge, shows the effects of opium by his inability to narrate events without investing them with a portentous significance which reflects rather the present mood of the writer than his feelings on the occasion dealt with.

### THE BURDEN OF THE INCOMMUNICABLE

SADDENED by these reflections, I was still more saddened by the chilling manner of my mother. If I could presume to descry a fault in my mother, it was that she turned the chilling aspects of her high-toned character too exclusively upon those whom, in any degree, she knew or supposed to be promoters of evil. Sometimes her austerity might even seem unjust. But at present the whole artillery of her displeasure seemed to be unmasked, and justly unmasked, against a moral aberration that offered for itself no excuse that was obvious in one moment, that was legible at one glance, that could utter itself in one word. My mother was predisposed to think ill of all causes that required many words: I, predisposed to subtleties of all sorts and degrees, had naturally become acquainted with the cases that could not unrobe their disguises to that degree of simplicity. If in this to me and Mary. misery having no relief, it is the great in compensation from the *Incommunicable*. And, if am not entirely deceived arise to propose another enigma my vanity entirely insupportable burden is that which only is in a manner studiously a fortitude? I should answer at

once—*It is the burden of the Incommunicable.* At this moment, sitting in the same room of the Priory with my mother, knowing how reasonable she was—how patient of explanations—how candid—how open to pity—not the less I sank away in a hopelessness that was immeasurable from all effort at explanation. She and I were contemplating the very same act; but she from one centre, I from another. Certain I was that, if through one half-minute she could realise in one deadly experience the suffering with which I had fought through more than three months, the amount of physical anguish, the desolation of all genial life, she would have uttered a rapturous absolution of that which else must always seem to her a mere explosion of wilful insubordination. “In this brief experience,” she would exclaim, “I read the record of your acquittal; in this fiery torment I acknowledge the gladiatorial resistance.” Such in the case supposed would have been her revised verdict. But this case was exquisitely impossible. Nothing which offered itself to my rhetoric gave any but the feeblest and most childish reflection of my past sufferings. Just so helpless did I feel, disarmed into just the same languishing impotence to face (or make an effort at facing) the difficulty before me, as most of us have felt in the dreams of our childhood when lying down without a struggle before some all-conquering lion. I felt that the situation was one without hope; a solitary word, which I attempted to mould upon my lips, died away into a sigh; and passively I acquiesced in the apparent confession spread through all the appearances—that in reality I had no palliation to produce.

## SYDNEY SMITH, 1771-1845

*The first of the extracts given below, which are taken from Hesketh Pearson's "The Smiths of Smiths," expresses an attitude similar to Samuel Butler's, but held with a good humour which Butler lacked. The other extracts show the depth of affection in the great wit and humourist.*

### HIS FATHER IMPROVED BY AGE

AFTER the death of Sydney's mother in 1802, his sister Maria took care of their father. Sydney thought highly of her, and when she died in 1816 wrote that he would have cultivated her as a friend if nature had not given her to him as a relation. After her death, Sydney visited his father as often as he could afford the journey and got to like him better: "My father is one of the very few people I have ever seen improved by age. He is become careless, indulgent, and anacreontic."

### LOSING A LIMB

The family circle at Foston Rectory sustained its first loss on New Year's Day, 1828, when Emily, the younger daughter, was married to Nathaniel Hibbert. . . . The Archbishop of York performed the ceremony at Foston Church, and after it was over Sydney felt as if he had "lost a limb and were walking about with one leg."

. . . "There is more happiness in a multitude of children than safety in a multitude of counsellors," he once wrote; "and if I was a rich man, I should like to have and would have twenty children." In 1814, when he was financially embarrassed, had no prospects, and

was surrounded by a young and increasing family, he had written to Jeffrey: "The haunts of Happiness are varied and rather unaccountable; but I have more often seen her among little children, and home firesides, and in country houses, than anywhere else—at least, I think so."

### THE BIRTH OF DOUGLAS

Mrs. Smith had two children during their stay in Doughty Street; the first died almost at once ("children," said Sydney, "are horribly insecure: the life of a parent is the life of a gambler"); and the second, Douglas, gave his parents many anxious moments both before and after birth.

"I am sure you will be glad to hear of Mrs. Sydney first. I have been expecting that she would be brought to bed every night for the last eight days, but to the amazement of the obstetric world she is still as pregnant as the Trojan horse. I will advertise you of her delivery."

A day or two after Jeffrey received this letter, the child was born, and Sydney sat up several nights by the bedside expecting every moment would be its last, and spent the daytime in keeping his wife's spirits up.

### DOUGLAS AT A PUBLIC SCHOOL

He spent much of his time educating his boys. . . . A public school was beyond his means, and in any case he detested the system. Nevertheless, Douglas was so clever, so quick at his lessons, that a school of some sort was desirable. Sydney inspected several and had just

picked on a place at Richmond when his elder brother "Bobus" offered to pay all expenses if he would send Douglas to a public school. . . . In the spring of 1818 Douglas went to Westminster, where he passed through the regular ill-treatment of those days, his body being lacerated by a master, and an eye almost dislodged by an older boy. His father had serious thoughts of removing him from the school, and in a letter to a friend referred to the training as "an intense system of tyranny of which the English are very fond and think it fits a boy for the world; but the world, bad as it is, has nothing half so bad."

### THE DEATH OF DOUGLAS

Douglas, his eldest son, had never been robust, and the hardships he had endured at Westminster, followed by the strain of working for the law while at Oxford, had gravely impaired his health. He became seriously ill, and his father went to London to watch over him. He died, after a long and painful illness, on April the 14th, at the age of twenty-four. "The first great misfortune of my life, and one which I shall never forget," wrote Sydney in his diary. "I never suspected how children weave themselves about the heart," he confessed to a friend, and, to another, "the habit of providing for human beings, and watching over for them for so many years, generates a fund of affection of the magnitude of which I was unaware." He never completely recovered from the shock, though many years later he characteristically did his best to view the tragedy from a different angle: "It was terrible at the time, but it has been best

for me since; it has been bad enough in life to have been ambitious for myself; it would have been dreadful to have been ambitious for another."

### SYDNEY SMITH'S DEATH

Towards the end he suffered much but spoke little. . . . Sometimes, when he was only half-conscious, the cry of "Douglas, Douglas!" escaped his lips.

## CHARLES LAMB, 1775-1834

*The Lovell portrayed below is Lamb's father, whom he introduced under this name into his account of the Benchers of the Inner Temple. Lamb is not at his best in this portrait, which suggests a combination of Sir Charles Grandison, Punch, and Uriah Heep, except towards the close, where it becomes human and affecting.*

### A PORTRAIT OF A FATHER

. . . I KNEW this Lovell. He was a man of an incorrigible and losing honesty. A good fellow withal, and "would strike." In the cause of the oppressed he never considered inequalities, or calculated the number of his opponents. He once wrested a sword out of the hand of a man of quality that had drawn upon him, and pommelled him severely with the hilt of it. The swordsman had offered insult to a female—an occasion upon which no odds against him could have prevented the interference of Lovell. He would stand next day bare-headed to the same person modestly to excuse his interference—for L. never forgot rank where something better was not concerned. L. was the liveliest little fellow breathing, had a face as gay as Garrick's, whom he was said greatly to resemble (I have a portrait of him which confirms it), possessed a fine turn for humorous poetry—next to Swift and Prior—moulded heads in clay or plaster of Paris to admiration, by the dint of natural genius merely, turned cribbage boards, and such small cabinet toys to perfection; took a hand at quadrille or bowls with equal facility; made punch better than any man of his degree in England; had the merriest quips

and conceits; and was altogether as brimful of rogueries and inventions as you could desire. He was a brother of the angle, moreover, and just such a free, hearty, honest companion as Mr. Izaak Walton would have chosen to go a-fishing with. I saw him in his old age and the decay of his faculties, palsy-smitten, in the last sad stage of human weakness—"a remnant most forlorn of what he was"—yet even then his eye would light up upon the mention of his favourite Garrick. He was greatest, he would say, in Bayes—"was upon the stage nearly throughout the performance, and as busy as a bee." At intervals, too, he would speak of his former life, and how he came up a little boy from Lincoln, to go to service, and how his mother cried at parting with him, and how he returned, after some few years' absence, in his smart new livery, to see her, and she blest herself at the change, and could hardly be brought to believe that it was "her own bairn." And then, the excitement subsiding, he would weep, till I have wished that sad second childhood might have a mother still to lay its head upon her lap. But the common mother of us all in no long time after received him gently into hers.

*(Old Benchers of the Inner Temple.)*



## JOHN KEATS, 1795-1821

*Keats lost his father when he was a child, and his mother married again after a short interval. Keats mentions her only once in his letters, but was very much attached to her in his early years, and when the news of her death reached him at school crept under a desk to hide his grief.*

### HIS MOTHER

MY mother I distinctly remember; she resembled John very much in the face, was extremely fond of him, and humoured him in every whim, of which he had not a few; she was a most excellent and affectionate parent and, as I thought, a woman of uncommon talents; she was confined to her bed many years before her death by a rheumatism, and at last died of a consumption; she would have sent us to harrow School as I often heard say, if she could have afforded. . . .

I do not remember much of mother, but her prodigality, and doting fondness for her children, particularly John, who resembled her in the face.

*(George Keats, John's brother.)*

## WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, 1759-1833

*William Wilberforce, the Slave-Trade Abolitionist, and one of the leading Evangelicals at the beginning of the nineteenth century, wrote the letters from which the following extracts are given to his son Samuel, who, of course, became a bishop in the due sequence of events, and was naturally known as "Soapy Sam."* The first two extracts are from letters written when Samuel was fourteen, the third from a letter sent him when he was going to Oxford.

### DO UT DES

I HOPE my dear Samuel remembers what I used to say to him of its not being enough to be good negatively; that is, not to be unkind, but that he tries to be kind positively. Unless this is his endeavour, he will never be able to secure himself against actual unkindness. And how shocking must it appear to a Holy God, and to the Holy Spirit, for anyone to grieve his Saviour by being UNkind to others, who is himself continually receiving marks of such kindness from a gracious Providence.

### BICKERSTETH ON PRAYER

Oh, my dearest Samuel, above all things attend to this. Keep steadily to private prayer. Read Bickersteth, not as you read other books, but *as you study a grammar*, to have all the rules surely fixed in the memory that they may always be called up at the moment for application.

But I must break off. Farewell, my very dear child.

I shall pray for you to-morrow still more earnestly than on a week-day. Farewell.

### SAMUEL'S ETERNAL INTERESTS

I knew the Archbishop of Dublin was to breakfast with me, and I had desired Mr. Wilson to come in a little before the hour the Bp. had named for leaving me, wishing to introduce Mr. Wilson to him in conformity to a principle I hold to be of first-rate importance, and which I recommend to you early in life. It is a principle on which for many years I have acted. It is that of bringing together all men who are like-minded, and who may probably at some time or other combine and concert for the public good. Never omit any opportunity, my dear Samuel, of getting acquainted with any good man or any useful man—of course, I mean that his usefulness in any one line should not be counter-vailed by any qualities of an opposite nature from which defilement might be contracted,—more perhaps depends on the selection of acquaintances than on any other circumstances in life, except, of course, still more close and intimate unions. Acquaintances are indeed the raw materials from which are manufactured friends, wives, husbands, etc. I wish it may please God to give you an opportunity of having some good ones to chuse out of on your first settling at Oxford. . . . You are the son, my dearest Samuel, of parents who I can truly declare have made your eternal interests the grand object of their care.

## JOHN STUART MILL, 1806-1873

*The system of education inflicted by James Mill on his son is described by John Stuart Mill in his Autobiography. As it is usual to learn Latin before Greek, and as John Stuart Mill records that he began to be taught Greek at the age of three, it is only fair to his father to emphasise that John was not declining "mensa" before he was weaned, but at the more normal age of eight*

### HIS EDUCATION

. . . A MAN who, in his own practice, so vigorously acted up to the principle of losing no time, was likely to adhere to the same rule in the instruction of his pupil. I have no remembrance of the time when I began to learn Greek. I have been told it was when I was three years old. My earliest recollection on the subject is that of committing to memory what my father termed vocables, being lists of common Greek words, with their signification in English, which he wrote out for me on cards. . . . I learnt no Latin until my eighth year. At that time I had read, under my father's tuition, a number of Greek prose authors, among whom I remember the whole of Herodotus, and of Xenophon's *Cyropædia* and Memorials of Socrates; some of the lives of the philosophers by Diogenes Laertius; part of Lucian, and Isocrates *Ad Demonicum* and *Ad Nicolem*. I also read, in 1813, the first six dialogues (in the common arrangement) of Plato, from the *Euthyphron* to the *Theætetus* inclusive: which last dialogue, I venture to think, would have been better omitted, as it was totally impossible I should understand it. But my father, in all his teaching,

demanding of me not only the utmost that I could do, but much that I could by no possibility have done.

. . . The only thing besides Greek that I learnt as a lesson in this part of my childhood, was arithmetic: this also my father taught me: it was the task of the evenings, and I well remember its disagreeableness. But the lessons were only a part of the daily instruction I received. Much of it consisted in the books I read by myself, and my father's discourses to me, chiefly during our walks. . . . My father's health required considerable and constant exercise, and he walked habitually before breakfast, generally in the green lanes towards Hornsey. In these walks I always accompanied him, and with my earliest recollections of green fields and wild flowers is mingled that of the account I gave him daily of what I had read the day before. . . . In these frequent talks about the books I read, he used, as opportunity offered, to give me explanations and ideas respecting civilization, government, morality, mental cultivation, which he required me afterwards to restate to him in my own words. . . .

In my eighth year I commenced learning Latin, in conjunction with a younger sister, to whom I taught it as I went on, and who afterwards repeated the lessons to my father: and from this time, other sisters or brothers being successively added as pupils, a considerable part of my day's work consisted of this preparatory teaching. It was a part which I greatly disliked; the more so, as I was held responsible for the lessons of my pupils, in almost as full a sense as for my own. . . .

He was earnestly bent upon my escaping not only the

corrupting influence which boys exercise over boys, but the contagion of vulgar modes of thought and feeling; and for this he was willing that I should pay the price of inferiority in the accomplishments which schoolboys in all countries chiefly cultivate. The deficiencies in my education were principally in the things which boys learn from being turned out to shift for themselves, and from being brought together in large numbers. From temperance and much walking, I grew up healthy and hardy, though not muscular; but I could do no feats of skill or physical strength, and knew none of the ordinary bodily exercises. It was not that play, or time for it, was refused me. Though no holidays were allowed, lest the habit of work should be broken, and a taste for idleness acquired, I had ample leisure in every day to amuse myself; but as I had no boy companions, and the animal need of physical activity was satisfied by walking, my amusements, which were mostly solitary, were in general of a quiet, if not a bookish, turn, and gave little stimulus to any other kind even of mental activity than that which was already called forth by my studies: I consequently remained long, and in a less degree have always remained, inexpert in anything requiring manual dexterity; my mind, as well as my hands, did its work very lamely when it was applied, or ought to have been applied, to the practical details which, as they are the chief interest of life to the majority of men, are also the things in which whatever mental capacity they have, chiefly shows itself: I was constantly meriting reproof by inattention, inobservance, and general slackness of mind in matters of daily life. My father was the extreme

opposite in these particulars: his senses and mental faculties were always on the alert; he carried decision and energy of character in his whole manner and into every action of life. . . . But the children of energetic parents, frequently grow up unenergetic, because they lean on their parents, and the parents are energetic for them. The education which my father gave me was in itself much more fitted for training me to *know* than to *do*. Not that he was unaware of my deficiencies; both as a boy and as a youth I was incessantly smarting under his severe admonitions on the subject. There was anything but insensibility or tolerance on his part towards such shortcomings: but, while he saved me from the demoralizing effects of school life, he made no effort to provide me with any sufficient substitute for its practicalizing influences. Whatever qualities he himself, probably, had acquired without difficulty or special training, he seems to have supposed that I ought to acquire as easily. He had not, I think, bestowed the same amount of thought and attention on this, as on most other branches of education; and here, as well as in some other points of my tuition, he seems to have expected effects without causes.

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN, 1809-1865

*The Dennis Hanks quoted in Mr. Albert Beveridge's "Life of Lincoln," from which the following extracts are made, was a cousin once removed of Lincoln, as appears from his statement: "I am a Base Born Child My Mother was Nancy Hanks the Ant of A. Lincoln's Mother."*

### LINCOLN'S EARLY YEARS

BETWEEN Thomas Lincoln and his son, there was little sympathy or understanding; and for some reason the father treated Abraham roughly. . . . "I have Seen his father Nock him Down of the fence when a Stranger would call for Information to Neighbour house" testifies Dennis Hanks. Thomas Lincoln also thrashed the lad, who took his punishment in silence, tears the only sign of what he felt and thought.

All this led Dennis Hanks to doubt whether "Abe loved his farther Very well or Not. . . . I Dont think he Did. . . . When he was with us he Seemed to think a great Deal of us But I thought Sum times it was hipo-critical But I Am Not Shore. . . . He [Thomas Lincoln] Loved his Relitives Do anything for them he could No Better Man than Old Tom Lincoln."

A. H. Chapman, son-in-law of Dennis Hanks, says: "Thos. Lincoln never showed by his actions that he thought much of his son Abraham when a boy. He treated him rather unkindly than otherwise, always appeared to think much more of his stepson John D. Johnston than he did of his own son Abraham."

. . . Thomas Lincoln was, perhaps, not without some excuse for his harshness; for certain it is that Abraham



was so absorbed with books that he showed no love for work with his hands, and was not quick to take up any physical task. "Farming, grubbing, hoeing, making fences," as John Hanks describes the boy's work, "had no attraction for him. He would carry a book with him when he had to go to work, and over its pages he would pore when rest time came." . . . Dennis Hanks admits that Abraham "was lazy—a very lazy man. He was always reading, Scribbling, writing, ciphering, writing Poetry." . . . This too is the testimony of his step-sister: "Abe was not energetic except in one thing—he was active and persistent in learning—read everything he could—ciphered on boards, on the walls."

Of young Lincoln's dislike of work, John Romine, a neighbor, asserts: "He worked for me, was always reading and thinking, I used to get mad at him. . . . I say Abe was awful lazy, he would laugh and talk and crack jokes and tell stories all the time didn't love work but did dearly love his pay. . . . Lincoln said to me one day that his father taught him to work but never learned him to love it."

. . . The father yielded to the influence of Sarah Lincoln (Abraham's step-mother), and did not disturb his son's devotion to books. "As a usual thing," says his wife, "Mr. Lincoln never made Abe quit reading to do anything if he could avoid it. He would do it himself first. . . . He himself felt the uses and necessities of education and wanted his boy Abraham to learn and he encouraged him to do it all ways he could."

Sarah Lincoln makes the best case she can for her husband; but after Abraham had left the family in

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Illinois, the father's contempt for the studious habits of his son seems to have returned. "I suppose Abe is still fooling hisself with eddication," he complained to William G. Greene . . . "I tried to stop it, but he has got that fool idea in his head, and can't be got out. Now I hain't got no eddication, but I get along far better than if I had"; and Thomas showed his visitor how he kept an account by making straight marks with a coal on a rafter and rubbing them out with a dish-rag: "that thar's a heap better'n yer eddication." In Indiana, however, a boyhood companion of Lincoln, Wesley Hall, relates that, "Old Tom couldn't read himself, but he wuz proud that Abe could and many a time he'd brag about how smart Abe wuz to the folks around about."

. . . Lincoln began to make speeches as early as his fifteenth year. He would mount a tree stump, or stand upon a fence and talk to his fellow workers, who would leave their jobs in fields or woods to listen. "His father would come and make him quit, send him to work," says his step-sister who saw and heard these incidents. Her mother tells us the same thing. "His father had to make him quit sometimes, as he would quit his own work to speak and made the other children as well as the men quit their work."

### HIS FATHER'S DEATH

In the winter of 1850-1851, Lincoln's father became very ill, and it finally appeared to those in his dreary cabin in Coles County that he would not recover. John

D. Johnston wrote Lincoln of his father's condition, but Lincoln did not answer. Again Johnston wrote and again Lincoln ignored the letter. At last Harriet Hanks wrote, and in response Lincoln sent Johnston a strange letter, which is made intelligible only by recalling the mutual dislike between father and son. . . .

Lincoln tells Johnston he had not answered "because it appeared to me that I could write nothing which would do any good. You already know I desire that neither father nor mother shall be in want of any comfort, either in health or sickness, while they live; and I feel sure you have not failed to use my name, if necessary, to procure a doctor, or anything else for father in his present sickness. . . . My business is such that I could hardly leave home now, [even] if it was not as it is, that my own wife was sick-a-bed. (It is a case of baby-sickness, and I suppose is not dangerous.) I sincerely hope father may recover his health; but if not, let him put his trust in God. At all events, tell him to remember to call upon and confide in our great and good and merciful Maker, who will not turn away from him in any extremity. He notes the fall of a sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our heads, and He will not forget the dying man who puts his trust in Him. . . . Say to him that if we could meet now it is doubtful whether it would not be more painful than pleasant, but that if it be his lot to go now, he will soon have a joyous meeting with many loved ones gone before, and where the rest of us, through the help of God, hope ere long to join him."

## WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR, 1775-1864

*The following extracts are from letters written in his last years by Landor to Robert Browning, who took great trouble to help the old man in his family difficulties. To avoid the consequences of an imprudent law-suit, Landor had made over the rest of his estate to his family, to whom he had already made over the bulk of it. This left him dependent on his eldest son, Arnold, for the small income he needed to live in Italy. Some of the unfortunate consequences of this rash act are indicated below.*

### HIS SONS

#### I

SIENA, 1859.

. . . A SHOWER, a very slight one, yesterday, reminded me that I had only a thin coat on, and not another to change. In vain I applied to my family for cloathes. Before you leave Florence, will you apply to the authorities for an order that my son deliver them up, and also my plate, together with whatever may remain out of the £110 left with him, after paying what he proposed I should pay for my board and other expenses, of which his mother told me he kept an account to a *quadrino*!

. . . I have given up to my son property worth thirteen or fourteen thousand scudi a year; it is hard I cannot receive from him a change of cloathes. . . .

#### 2

. . . If in the bookcase at the Villa there are any [books] which my son bought, let him justly detain them, but

no person of common decency would take advantage of my utter helplessness to rob me of the little I possessed. I gave up to my family the value of many thousands, and they refuse me the little I reserved, not worth £20. This, among less privations, has deprived me of my senses. I lie in bed seven or eight hours without a wink of sleep. I am a murdered man, altho' not yet dead.

3

. . . I would request my brothers to expostulate for me on the detention of these things, as they know there is nothing in the house but was bought with my money—but they have received the statement I made to Mr. Arnold of my just complaints, of which he took no notice. Therefore they will have nothing more to do with any of the family. . . . It will soon be over. I have less sleep, and consequently less appetite, than ever. I have been as much murdered as if I had been shot or poisoned. They who robbed an indulgent and helpless father are capable of either.

4

1862.

. . . I have only to add that my son Charles has promised to see me packed up and carried to England [after his death]. I wish the hour were come. Arnold, ungrateful and disobedient as he is, will hardly refuse to repay him the small expenses of my funeral. There will be

only a small slab of stone over my grave, bearing my name, date of birth, and death. Let me hear that kind Sandforth has received the £10. 5. 0. . . .

5

. . . Sandforth has paid £10. 5. 0. for expenses of walling in my grave. Surely my son Arnold will not hesitate to refund this trifle. . . . I beg of you to write to him on the subject. He knows that it is the only favour he ever can confer on his infirm and wretched father. . . .

6

. . . I hope to live long enough to know that Arnold has sent you the ten pounds. I knew that he, being my heir, must pay the expenses of my funeral, and I supposed he would repay my brother the money advanced for my support. I hope Henry [Landor's brother] will oblige him to do so.

7

. . . . Never shall I recover from the shock this refusal [Arnold's refusal to pay the ten pounds] has given me. . . . I now begin to find my eyesight fail me, and my hand so tremble that I must leave off writing more on what is left of my paper; so adieu, my very kind friend.

8

. . . My son Walter has paid for my grave. His elder brother, my heir and present possessor, refused his

## PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

mother, saying that Walter could better spare the money. . . . I am grieved to add that in order to pay Walter or Charles for the transportation of my body to England I ordered a case seven feet long, to send immediately all my pictures to be sold there. Order was given by the authorities that I must state the number, size, painter, and value of them. Having just sixpence-halfpenny in the world, this I could not do. Therefore I ordered the case to be broken open and returned to the carpenter.

. . . The weather is favourable to me. It lets plenty of air thro' the holes in my straw hat.

### 9

. . . Two of my sons, Walter and Charles, are very different from Arnold. . . . It is equally my duty and my wish that they secure for themselves what Arnold promist in writing. It is £500 a year. They would be contented with £150 each, but even this he refuses to pay.

## QUEEN VICTORIA, 1818-1901

*The Memorandum quoted here was presented to the Prince of Wales by the Prince Consort and Queen Victoria in 1858, on his eighteenth birthday. It conveys the impression that in future he will be allowed a little freedom, but this impression was delusive, for he was at once put in the charge of a strict disciplinarian, Colonel Bruce, who was instructed to "regulate all the Prince's movements, the distribution and employment of his time, and the occupation and details of his daily life." Almost daily reports on these matters were furnished by the Colonel to the Prince's parents.*

*The second, third, and fourth extracts are from letters written by the Prince on the death of his father. The first two were written under his mother's instructions, but it is interesting to notice that the third, to his Oxford tutor, written spontaneously, is exactly in his mother's style, evidence of how impressionable the Prince was, and how ready to conform with his mother's wishes, had she treated him reasonably.*

*The letter on the occasion of Princess Alice's engagement to Louis of Hesse is to Queen Victoria's uncle, the King of the Belgians.*

### MEMORANDUM TO THE PRINCE OF WALES

LIFE is composed of duties, and in the due, punctual, and cheerful performance of them the true Christian, true soldier, and true gentleman is recognised.

You will in future have rooms allotted to your sole use, in order to give you an opportunity of learning how to occupy yourself unaided by others and to utilise your time in the best manner, viz.: such time as may not be otherwise occupied by lessons, by the different tasks



which will be given to you by your director of studies, or reserved for exercise and recreation. A new sphere of life will open for you, in which you will have to be taught what to do and what not to do, a subject requiring study more important than any in which you have hitherto engaged. For it is a subject of *study* and the most difficult one of your life, how to become a good man and a thorough gentleman. . . .

Your personal allowance will be increased; but it is expected that you will carefully order your expenditure so as to remain strictly within the bounds of the sum allowed to you, which will be amply sufficient for your general requirements. . . .

You will try to emancipate yourself as much as possible from the thralldom of abject dependence for your daily wants of life on your servants. The more you can do for yourself and the less you need their help, the greater will be your independence and real comfort.

The Church Catechism has enumerated the duties which you owe to God and your neighbour—let your rule of conduct be always in strict conformity with these precepts, and remember that the first and principal one of all, given us by our Lord and Saviour Himself is this: "that you should love your neighbour as yourself, and do unto men as you would they should do unto you."

PRINCE EDWARD TO LORD PALMERSTON:  
PRIME MINISTER

*December 16, 1861.*

. . . I cannot tell you how touched my mother was by your kind and sympathising letter.

## QUEEN VICTORIA

You know the loss which we have sustained, and how irreparable it is to her, to us, and to the country for whom he lived.

My mother wished me to tell you that her life would now be but a life of duty, which she would perform to the best of her abilities, but that her worldly career was closed for ever.

### PRINCE EDWARD TO LORD RUSSELL: FOREIGN SECRETARY

. . . She wished me to say that her future happiness was blighted for ever, but that she would now live solely for her duties and try in every way to do that which she thought her departed husband would have wished. My mother hopes that her children will be an assistance to her, and that they will show themselves worthy in every way of such a father.

### PRINCE EDWARD TO DR. ACLAND

. . . The chaos which *now* exists, and which *will* exist for a long time to come, is too dreadful to think of, as *you* know full well *what* a father he was to us all. Thank God the Queen bears up most wonderfully, and her health has not suffered, but what it has been to *her* is untold; God only knows *how* fearful this blow has been to her; but you may be quite sure that we shall do everything in our power to assist and console her.

It is gratifying to see how thoroughly the whole nation mourns and sympathises with us, and that they

## PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

feel what a loss *he* is to the whole country, and *how* grateful they ought to be for what he has done for them.

### THE ENGAGEMENT OF PRINCESS ALICE

DEAREST UNCLE,

I hasten to announce to you that yesterday our dear young couple here were engaged, that we *are all* very happy. Louis was spoken to yesterday on our return from Aldershot by Albert—who told him he would have an opportunity of speaking to Alice—and this opportunity he took last night after dinner when he was standing alone with her at the fire, and every one else was occupied in talking. They whispered it to me, and then, after we left the drawing-room, we sent for good Louis—and the young people met and confirmed in a very touching manner *what* they had merely been able to whisper to one another before. . . . He is a dear, good, amiable, high-principled young man—who I am sure will make our dearest Alice *very* happy, and she will, I am sure, be a most devoted loving wife to him. She is *very, very* happy, and it is a pleasure to see their young, happy faces beaming with love for one another.

. . . I am very, very happy, so are we both, but I am still a good deal agitated and flurried by the whole event.

## THOMAS CARLYLE, 1795-1881

*Carlyle's account of his father occurs in some notes on Wordsworth which he wrote at Mentone in 1867, a few years after his wife's death. He was in an unhappy state of mind, brooding over his wife, and disposed to think that no one except his wife, his father, and, with spasmodic reservations, himself was of much significance.*

### HIS FATHER

. . . IN general I forget what men they were; and now remember only the excellent sagacity, distinctness and credibility of Wordsworth's portraiture of them. Never, or never but once, had I seen a stronger intellect, a more luminous and veracious power of insight, directed upon such a survey of fellow-men and their contemporary journey through the world. . . . I found a very superior talent in these Wordsworth delineations. They might have reminded me, though I know not whether they did at the time, of a larger series like them, which I had from my father during two wet days which confined us to the house, the last time we met at Scotsbrig! These were of select Annandale figures whom I had seen in my boyhood; and of whom, now that they were all vanished, I was glad to have, for the first time, some real knowledge as facts; the outer *simulacra*, in all their equipments, being still so pathetically vivid to me. My father's, in simple rugged force, picturesque ingenuity, veracity and brevity, were, I do judge, superior even to Wordsworth's, as bits of human portraiture; without flavour of contempt, too, but given out with judicial indifference; and intermixed here and there with flashes

of the poetical and soberly pathetic (*e.g.* the death of Ball of Dunnaby, and why the two joiners were seen sawing wood in a pour of rain), which the Wordsworth sketches, mainly of distant and indifferent persons, altogether wanted. Oh, my brave, dear, and ever-honoured peasant father, where among the grandees, sages, and recognised poets of the world, did I listen to such sterling speech as yours, golden product of a heart and brain all sterling and royal! That is a literal fact; and it has often filled me with strange reflections, in the whirlpools of this mad world!

## JANE WELSH CARLYLE, 1801-1866

*The second of the following extracts is from a note on Mrs. Carlyle's death written by her friend, Geraldine Jewsbury. Miss Jewsbury's reminiscences of Mrs. Carlyle were characterised in these terms by her husband: "Few or none of these narratives are correct in details, but there is a certain mythical truth in all or most of them." Mrs. Warren was the housekeeper in Cheyne Row.*

### "THE WORST-NATURED OF WOMEN"

#### I

AYR, Sunday, 18 August 1839.

... MY Mother continues the worst-natured of women; but I let her be doing, and "keep never minding." Once a day, generally after breakfast, she tries a fall with me. And in three words I give her to understand that I will not be snubbed; privately resolving to be sore up in the world indeed, before I subject myself to such unreasonable usage again.

(To T. Carlyle, Scotsbrig, Ecclefechan.)

#### 2

### TWO WAX CANDLES

On that miserable night, when we were preparing to receive her, Mrs. Warren came to me and said that, one time when she was very ill, she said to her that, when the last had come, she was to go upstairs into the closet of the spare room and there she would find two

## PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

wax candles wrapt in paper, and that those were to be lighted, and burned. She said that after she came to live in London, she wanted to give a party. Her mother wished everything to be very nice, and went out and bought candles and confectionery; and set out a table, and lighted up the room quite splendidly, and called her to come and see it, when all was prepared. She was angry; she said people would say she was extravagant, and would ruin her husband. She took away two of the candles and some of the cakes. Her mother was hurt and began to weep. She was pained at once at what she had done; she tried to comfort her, and was dreadfully sorry. She took the candles and wrapped them up, and put them where they could be easily found. We found them and lighted them, and did as she had desired.

*(Geraldine Tewebury.)*

## CHARLES DICKENS, 1812-1870

*The first of the extracts here quoted is from a record of a conversation between Dickens and Forster. Dickens talking about his father was very different from Dickens writing about him. In his talk, mindful of the dignity of the head of the Dickens's family, he was apt to stress his father's punctiliousness and industry, neither of which qualities is apparent either in Micawber or in old Dorrit, both of whom Dickens drew from his father.*

*The second extract is from an autobiographical fragment which Dickens wrote shortly before "David Copperfield." Dickens never forgave his harassed mother for wishing him to remain at the warehouse, and makes no mention in this record of the many visits which his mother made to him there.*

### HIS FATHER

I KNOW my father to be as kind-hearted and generous a man as ever lived in the world. Everything that I can remember of his conduct to his wife, or children, or friends, in sickness or affliction, is beyond all praise. By me, as a sick child, he has watched night and day, unweariedly and patiently, many nights and days. He never undertook any business, charge or trust, that he did not zealously, conscientiously, punctually, honourably discharge. His industry has always been untiring. He was proud of me, in his way, and had a great admiration of the comic singing. But, in the ease of his temper, and the straitness of his means, he appeared to have utterly lost at this time the idea of educating me at all, and to have utterly put from him the notion that I had any claim upon him, in that regard, whatever. So I



degenerated into cleaning his boots of a morning, and my own; and making myself useful in the work of the little house; and looking after my younger brothers and sisters (we were now six in all); and going on such poor errands as arose out of our poor way of living.

### THE BLACKING WAREHOUSE

Its chief manager, James Lamert, the relative who had lived with us in Bayham Street, seeing how I was employed from day to day, and knowing what our domestic circumstances then were, proposed that I should go into the blacking warehouse, to be as useful as I could, at a salary, I think, of six shillings a week. . . . The offer was accepted very willingly by my father and mother, and on a Monday morning I went down to the blacking warehouse to begin my business life.

It is wonderful to me how I could have been cast so easily away at such an age. It is wonderful to me, that, even after my descent into the poor little drudge I had been since we came to London, no one had compassion enough on me—a child of singular abilities, quick, eager, delicate, and soon hurt, bodily or mentally—to suggest that something might have been spared, as certainly it might have been, to place me at any common school. Our friends, I take it, were tired out. No one made any sign. My father and mother were quite satisfied. They could hardly have been more so, if I had been twenty years of age, distinguished at a grammar-school, and going to Cambridge. . . .

I know I do not exaggerate, unconsciously and un-

intentionally, the scantiness of my resources and the difficulties of my life. I know that if a shilling or so were given me by anyone, I spent it in a dinner or a tea. I know that I worked, from morning to night, with common men and boys—a shabby child. I know that I tried, but ineffectually, not to anticipate my money, and to make it last the week through; by putting it away in a drawer I had in the counting-house, wrapped into six little parcels, each parcel containing the same amount, and labelled with a different day. I know that I have lounged about the streets, insufficiently and unsatisfactorily fed. I know that, but for the mercy of God, I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond.

But I held some station at the blacking warehouse too. . . . I knew from the first that if I could not do my work as well as any of the rest, I could not hold myself above slight and contempt. I soon became at least as expeditious and as skilful with my hands, as either of the other boys. Though perfectly familiar with them, my conduct and manners were different enough from theirs to place a space between us. They, and the men, always spoke of me as “the young gentleman.” . . .

At last, one day, my father, and the relative so often mentioned, quarrelled—quarrelled by letter, for I took the letter from my father to him which caused the explosion, but quarrelled very fiercely. It was about me. . . . Soon after I had given him the letter, my cousin (he was a sort of cousin, by marriage) told me he was very much insulted about me; and that it was impossible to keep me, after that. I cried very much, partly because

it was so sudden, and partly because in his anger he was violent about my father, though gentle to me. Thomas, the old soldier, comforted me, and said he was sure it was for the best. With a relief so strange that it was like oppression, I went home.

My mother set herself to accommodate the quarrel, and did so next day. She brought home a request for me to return next morning, and a high character of me, which I am very sure I deserved. My father said I should go back no more, and should go to school. I do not write resentfully or angrily: for I know how all these things have worked together to make me what I am: but I never afterwards forgot, I never shall forget, I never can forget, that my mother was warm for my being sent back.

## MATTHEW ARNOLD, 1822-1888

*Dr. Arnold, the famous headmaster of Rugby, was the father of Matthew Arnold, who commemorated him in "Rugby Chapel," fifteen years after his death. The father and son were very different, but Matthew had a great admiration for his father, and was always pleased, perhaps as much for his father's sake as for his own, when he could trace any intellectual resemblance between them. "I have often thought," he once wrote to his sister, "since I published this [pamphlet] on the Italian question, about dear papa's pamphlets . . . his pamphleteering talent was one of his very strongest and most pronounced literary sides, if he had been in the way of developing it. It is the one literary side on which I find myself in close contact with him, and that is a great pleasure."*

### RUGBY CHAPEL

November 1857.

COLDLY, sadly descends  
The autumn evening. The field  
Strewn with its dank yellow drifts  
Of wither'd leaves, and the elms,  
Fade into dimness apace,  
Silent; hardly a shout  
From a few boys late at their play!  
The lights come out in the street,  
In the schoolroom windows; but cold,  
Solemn, unlighted, austere,  
Through the gathering darkness, arise  
The chapel walls, in whose bound  
Thou, my father! art laid.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

. . . Fifteen years have gone round  
Since thou arosest to tread,  
In the summer morning, the road  
Of death, at a call unforeseen,  
Sudden. For fifteen years,  
We who till then in thy shade  
Restored as under the boughs  
Of a mighty oak, have endured  
Sunshine and rain as we might,  
Bare, unshaded, alone,  
Lacking the shelter of thee.

O strong soul, by what shore  
Tarriest thou now? For that force,  
Surely, has not been left vain!  
Somewhere, surely, afar,  
In the sounding labour-house vast  
Of being, is practised that strength,  
Zealous, beneficent, firm!  
. . . If, in the paths of the world,  
Stones might have wounded thy feet,  
Toil or dejection have tried  
Thy spirit, of that we saw  
Nothing—to us thou wast still  
Cheerful, and helpful, and firm!  
Therefore to thee it was given  
Many to save with thyself;  
And, at the end of thy day,  
O faithful shepherd! to come,  
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.

## THE BRONTËS

THE REVEREND PATRICK BRONTË, 1777-1861

CHARLOTTE BRONTË, 1816-1855

EMILY BRONTË, 1818-1848

ANNE BRONTË, 1820-1849

*The following extracts are from Mrs. Gaskell's "Life of Charlotte Brontë."*

### HAWORTH PARSONAGE

HAWORTH PARSONAGE is . . . an oblong stone house, facing down the hill on which the village stands, and with the front door right opposite to the western door of the church, distant about a hundred yards. Of this space twenty yards or so are occupied by the grassy garden, which is scarcely wider than the house. The graveyard lies on two sides of the house and garden. The house consists of four rooms on each floor, and is two stories high. . . . Upstairs were four bedchambers of similar size, with the addition of a small apartment over the passage. . . . This little extra upstairs room was appropriated to the children. Small as it was, it was not called a nursery; indeed, it had not the comfort of a fireplace in it; the servants—two affectionate, warm-hearted sisters, who cannot now speak of the family without tears—called the room the "children's study." The age of the eldest student was perhaps by this time seven.

### THE BRONTË CHILDREN

Little Maria Brontë was delicate and small in appearance, which seemed to give greater effect to her wonderful

precocity of intellect. She must have been her mother's companion and helpmate in many a household and nursery experience, for Mr. Brontë was, of course, much engaged in his study; and besides, he was not naturally fond of children, and felt their frequent appearance on the scene as a drag both on his wife's strength and as an interruption to the comfort of the household. . . .

From their first going to Haworth, their walks (the six children) were directed rather out towards the heathery moors, sloping behind the parsonage, than towards the long descending street. A good old woman, who came to nurse Mrs. Brontë in the illness—an internal cancer—which grew and gathered upon her, not many months after her arrival at Haworth, tells me that at that time the six little creatures used to walk out, hand in hand, towards the glorious wild moors, which in after days they loved so passionately; the elder ones taking thoughtful care for the toddling wee things.

They were grave and silent beyond their years; subdued, probably, by the presence of serious illness in the house; for, at the time which my informant speaks of, Mrs. Brontë was confined to the bedroom from which she never came forth alive. "You would not have known there was a child in the house, they were such still, noiseless, good little creatures. Maria would shut herself up" (Maria, but seven!) "in the children's study with a newspaper, and be able to tell one everything when she came out; debates in parliament, and I don't know what all. She was as good as a mother to her sisters and brother. But there were never such good children. I used to think them spiritless, they were so different to

any children I had ever seen. They were good little creatures. Emily was the prettiest."

Mrs. Brontë was the same patient, cheerful person as we have seen her formerly; very ill, suffering great pain, but seldom if ever complaining; at her better times begging her nurse to raise her in bed to let her see her clean the grate, "because she did it as it was done in Cornwall"; devotedly fond of her husband, who warmly repaid her affection, and suffered no one else to take the night-nursing; but, according to my informant, the mother was not very anxious to see much of her children, probably because the sight of them, knowing how soon they were to be left motherless, would have agitated her too much. So the little things clung quietly together, for their father was busy in his study and in his parish, or with their mother, and they took their meals alone; sat reading, or whispering low, in the children's study, or wandered out on the hillside, hand in hand.

The ideas of Rousseau and Mr. Day on education had filtered down through many classes. . . . I imagine Mr. Brontë must have formed some of his opinions on the management of children from these two theorists. His practice was not half so wild or extraordinary as that to which an aunt of mine was subjected by a disciple of Mr. Day's. She had been taken by this gentleman and his wife, to live with them as their adopted child. . . . Her food and clothing were of the very simplest and rudest description, on Spartan principles. A healthy, merry child, she did not much care for dress or eating; but the treatment she felt as a real cruelty was this. They had a carriage, in which she and her favourite dog



were taken an airing on alternate days; the creature whose turn it was to be left at home being tossed in a blanket. . . . Her affright at the tossing was probably the reason why it was persevered in. Dressed-up ghosts had become common, and she did not care for them, so the blanket exercise was to be the next mode of hardening her nerves.

### CHARLOTTE BRONTË

Owing to Mr. Brontë's great age, and long-formed habits of solitary occupation when in the house, his daughter was left to herself for the greater part of the day. Ever since his serious attacks of illness, he had dined alone; a portion of her dinner, regulated by strict attention to the diet most suitable for him, being taken into his room by herself. After dinner she read to him for an hour or so, as his sight was too weak to allow of his reading long to himself. . . . The hours of retiring for the night had always been early in the Parsonage; now family prayers were at eight o'clock; directly after which Mr. Brontë and old Tabby went to bed, and Martha was not long in following. But Charlotte could not have slept if she had gone,—could not have rested on her desolate couch. She stopped up,—it was very tempting,—late and later; striving to beguile the lonely night with some employment, till her weak eyes failed to read or to sew, and could only weep in solitude over the dead that were not. . . . On windy nights, cries and sobs and wailings seemed to go round the house, as of the dearly-beloved striving to force their way to her.

## THE BRONTËS

Some one conversing with her once objected, in my presence, to that part of *Jane Eyre* in which she hears Rochester's voice crying out to her in a great crisis of her life, he being many, many miles distant at the time. I do not know what incident was in Miss Brontë's recollection when she replied, in a low voice, drawing in her breath: "But it is a true thing; it really happened."

## PATRICK BRONTË

When mere children, as soon as they could read and write, Charlotte and her brothers and sisters used to invent and act little plays of their own, in which the Duke of Wellington, my daughter Charlotte's hero, was sure to come off conqueror; when a dispute would not unfrequently arise amongst them regarding the comparative merits of him, Buonaparte, Hannibal and Cæsar. When the argument got warm, and rose to its height, as their mother was then dead, I had sometimes to come in as arbitrator, and settle the dispute according to the best of my judgment. Generally, in the management of these concerns, I frequently thought that I discovered signs of rising talent, which I had seldom or never before seen in any of their age. . . . A circumstance occurs to my mind which I may as well mention. When my children were very young, when, as far as I can remember, the oldest was about ten years of age, and the youngest about four, thinking that they knew more than I had yet discovered, in order to make them speak with less timidity, I deemed that if they were put under a sort of cover I might gain my end; and happening to

have a mask in the house, I told them all to stand and speak boldly from under the cover of the mask.

I began with the youngest (Anne), and asked what a child like her most wanted; she answered, "Age and experience." I asked the next (Emily) what I had best do with her brother Branwell, who was sometimes a naughty boy; she answered, "Reason with him, and when he won't listen to reason, whip him." I asked Branwell what was the best way of knowing the difference between the intellects of man and woman; he answered, "By considering the difference between them as to their bodies." I then asked Charlotte what was the best book in the world; she answered, "The Bible." And what was the next best; she answered, "The Book of Nature." I then asked the next what was the best mode of education for a woman; she answered, "That which would make her rule her house well." Lastly, I asked the oldest what was the best mode of spending time; she answered, "By laying it out in preparation for a happy eternity." I may not have given precisely their words, but I have nearly done so, as they made a deep and lasting impression on my memory. The substance, however, was exactly what I have stated.

## ANTHONY TROLLOPE, 1815-1882

*Trollope's Autobiography, published in the late 'seventies, is one of the most sincere and unpretentious in our literature. Owing to the frankness with which he described his methodical methods of novel-writing, it killed his reputation with the Victorians.*

### HIS FATHER

WHEN I left Winchester, I had three more years of school before me, having as yet endured nine. My father at this time having left my mother and sisters with my younger brother in America, took himself to live at a wretched tumble-down farmhouse, on the second farm he had hired! And I was taken there with him. It was nearly three miles from Harrow, at Harrow Weald, but in the parish; and from this house I was again sent to that school as a day-boarder. Let those who know what is the usual appearance and what the usual appurtenances of a boy at such a school, consider what must have been my condition among them, with a daily walk of twelve miles through the lanes, added to the other little troubles and labours of a school life!

Perhaps the eighteen months which I passed in this condition, walking to and fro on those miserably dirty lanes, was the worst period of my life. I was now over fifteen, and had come to an age at which I could appreciate at its full the misery of expulsion from all social intercourse. I had not only no friends, but was despised by all my companions. The farmhouse was not only no more than a farmhouse, but was one of those farmhouses which seem always to be in danger of falling into the

neighbouring horse-pond. As it crept downwards from house to stables, from stables to barns, from barns to cowsheds, and from cowsheds to dung-heaps, one could hardly tell where one began and the other ended! There was a parlour in which my father lived, shut up among big books; but I passed my most jocund hours in the kitchen, making innocent love to the bailiff's daughter.

. . . I wish I could give some adequate picture of the gloom of that farmhouse. My elder brother . . . was at Oxford. My father and I lived together, he having no means of living except what came from the farm. My memory tells me that he was always in debt to his landlord and to the tradesmen he employed. Of self-indulgence no one could accuse him. Our table was poorer, I think, than that of the bailiff who still hung on to our shattered fortunes. The furniture was mean and scanty. There was a large rambling kitchen-garden, but no gardener; and many times verbal incentives were made to me,—generally, I fear, in vain,—to get me to lend a hand at digging and planting. Into the hayfield on holidays I was often compelled to go,—not, I fear, with much profit. My father's health was very bad. During the last ten years of his life, he spent nearly half of his time in bed, suffering agony from sick headaches. But he was never idle unless when suffering. He had at this time commenced a work,—an *Encyclopædia Ecclesiastica*, as he called it,—on which he laboured to the moment of his death. It was his ambition to describe all ecclesiastical terms, including the denominations of every fraternity of monks and every convent of nuns,

with all their orders and subdivisions. Under crushing disadvantages, with few or no books of reference, with immediate access to no library, he worked at his most ungrateful task with unflagging industry. When he died, three numbers out of eight had been published by subscription; and are now, I fear, unknown, and buried in the midst of that huge pile of futile literature, the building-up of which has broken so many hearts.

And my father, though he would try, as it were by a side wind, to get a useful spurt of work out of me, either in the garden or in the hayfield, had constantly an eye to my scholastic improvement. From my very babyhood, before those first days at Harrow, I had to take my place alongside of him as he shaved at six o'clock in the morning, and say my early rules from the Latin Grammar, or repeat the Greek alphabet; and was obliged at those early lessons to hold my head inclined towards him, so that in the event of guilty fault, he might be able to pull my hair without stopping his razor or dropping his shaving-brush. No father was ever more anxious for the education of his children, though I think none ever knew less how to go about the work. Of amusement, as far as I can remember, he never recognised the need. He allowed himself no distraction, and did not seem to think it was necessary to a child. I cannot bethink me of aught that he ever did for my gratification; but for my welfare,—for the welfare of us all,—he was willing to make any sacrifice. At this time, . . . he could not give his time to teach me, for every hour that he was not in the fields was devoted to his monks and nuns; but he

would require me to sit at a table with Lexicon and Gradus before me.

### HIS MOTHER

. . . I must say a few words of my mother,—partly because filial duty will not allow me to be silent as to a parent who made for herself a considerable name in the literature of her day, and partly because there were circumstances in her career well worthy of notice. . . . In the first ten years of her married life she became the mother of six children, four of whom died of consumption.

. . . From the date of their marriage up to 1827, when my mother went to America, my father's affairs had always been going down in the world. . . . She looked about her at her American cousins, and resolved to write a book about them. This book she brought back in 1831, and published it early in 1832. When she did this she was already fifty. When doing this she was aware that unless she could so succeed in making money, there was no money for any of the family. She had never before earned a shilling. She almost immediately received a considerable sum from the publishers,—if I remember rightly, amounting to two sums of £400 each within a few months; and from that moment till nearly the time of her death, at any rate for more than twenty years, she was in receipt of a considerable income from her writings.

. . . She refurnished the house which I have called Orley Farm, and surrounded us again with moderate

comforts. Of the mixture of joviality and industry which formed her character, it is almost impossible to speak with exaggeration. The industry was a thing apart, kept to herself. It was not necessary that any one who lived with her should see it. She was at her table at four in the morning, and had finished her work before the world had begun to be aroused. But the joviality was all for others. She could dance with other people's legs, eat and drink with other people's palates, be proud with the lustre of other people's finery. Every mother can do that for her own daughters; but she could do it for any girl whose look and voice and manners pleased her. Even when she was at work, the laughter of those she loved was a pleasure to her. She had much, very much, to suffer. Work sometimes came hard to her, so much being required, for she was extravagant, and liked to have money to spend; but of all people I have known she was the most joyous, or, at any rate, the most capable of joy.

We continued this renewed life at Harrow for nearly two years, during which I was still at the school, and at the end of which I was nearly nineteen. Then there came a great catastrophe. My father, who, when he was well, lived a sad life among his monks and nuns, still kept a horse and gig. One day . . . I was summoned very early in the morning to drive him up to London. He had been ill, and must still have been very ill indeed when he submitted to be driven by any one. It was not till we had started that he told me that I was to put him on board the Ostend boat. This I did, driving through the city down to the docks. . . . Something of



a general flitting abroad I had heard before, but why he should have flown the first, and flown so suddenly, I did not in the least know till I returned. When I got back, the gig, the house, and furniture were all in the charge of the sheriff's officers.

. . . We followed my father to Belgium, and established ourselves in a large house just outside the walls of Bruges. At this time, and till my father's death, everything was done with money earned by my mother. . . .

By degrees an established sorrow was at home among us. My brother was an invalid, and the horrid word, which of all words was for some years after the most dreadful to us, had been pronounced. It was no longer a delicate chest, and some temporary necessity for peculiar care,—but consumption! . . . From that time forth my mother's most visible occupation was that of nursing. There were two sick men in the house, and hers were the hands that tended them. The novels went on, of course. We had already learnt to know that they would be forthcoming at stated intervals,—and they always were forthcoming. The doctor's vials and the ink-bottle held equal place in my mother's rooms. I have written many novels under many circumstances; but I doubt much whether I could write one when my whole heart was by the bedside of a dying son. Her power of dividing herself into two parts, and keeping her intellect by itself clear from the troubles of the world, and fit for the duty it had to do, I never saw equalled. I do not think that the writing of a novel is the most difficult task which a man may be called upon

to do; but it is a task that may be supposed to demand a spirit fairly at ease. The work of doing it with a troubled spirit killed Sir Walter Scott. My mother went through it unscathed in strength, though she performed all the work of day-nurse and night-nurse to a sick household,—for there were soon three of them dying.

Just before Christmas my brother died, and was buried at Bruges. In the following February my father died, and was buried alongside of him,—and with him died that tedious task of his, which I can only hope may have solaced many of his latter hours. . . . He was a man, finely educated, of great parts, with immense capacity for work, physically strong very much beyond the average of men, addicted to no vices, carried off by no pleasures, affectionate by nature, most anxious for the welfare of his children, born to fair fortunes. . . . But everything went wrong with him. The touch of his hand seemed to create failure. He embarked in one hopeless enterprise after another, spending on each all the money he could at the time command. But the worst curse to him of all was a temper so irritable that even those whom he loved the best could not endure it. We were all estranged from him, and yet I believe that he would have given his heart's blood for any of us.

After his death my mother moved to England. . . . She continued writing up to 1856, when she was seventy-six years old, and had at that time produced 114 volumes, of which the first was not written till she was fifty.

She was an unselfish, affectionate, and most industrious

woman, . . . endowed, too, with much creative power, with considerable humour, and a genuine feeling for romance. But she was neither clear-sighted nor accurate; and in her attempts to describe morals, manners, and even facts, was unable to avoid the pitfalls of exaggeration.

## HERBERT SPENCER, 1820-1903

*Herbert Spencer's dispassionate survey of his parents, and scientific classification of his mother, are taken from his Autobiography.*

### HIS FATHER

... THERE remains only to name the one great drawback—he was not kind to my mother. Exacting and inconsiderate, he did not habitually display that sympathy which should characterise the marital relation. . . . He held, for instance, that everyone should speak clearly, and that those who did not ought to suffer the resulting evil. Hence, if he did not understand some question my mother put, he would remain silent; not asking what the question was, and letting it go unanswered. He continued this habit all through life, notwithstanding its futility: there resulted no improvement. . . . I doubt not that during their engagement my mother displayed interest in his aims—factitious interest, prompted by the relation then existing between them. After marriage she gave little or no sign of such interest, and my father was doubtless much disappointed. His disappointment was the greater because he was not aware that intellectual activity in women is liable to be diminished after marriage by the antagonism between individuation and reproduction everywhere operative throughout the organic world; and that hence such intellectual activity as is natural, and still more that which is artificial, is restrained. The remaining cause (of his unsympathetic attitude to his wife) was that chronic irritability consequent on his nervous disorder, which set in some two or three years

after marriage and continued during the rest of his life. Letters show that he was conscious of this abnormal lack of control over temper; but, as unhappily I can testify from personal experience, consciousness of such lack does not exclude the evil or much mitigate it.

While not ignoring this serious defect (which in the absence of these causes would probably never have been manifested), I contemplate my father's nature with much admiration. On looking round among those I have known, I cannot find anyone of higher type.

### HIS MOTHER

. . . The engagement between my father and my mother, extending over a period of six or seven years, was, as before indicated, persistently opposed by my maternal grandmother; and during a part of this interval, my mother, in pursuance of the ideas of filial duty still prevailing at that time, broke off the engagement. How it came to be renewed I do not know; but most likely the interdict ceased only when my grandfather's great loss of property took away my grandmother's chief ground of opposition. In those days valentines were not, as they have since become, mere compliments, or else practical jokes, but were written in all seriousness; and, among family papers, I have three written by my father to my mother—all of them acrostics on her name. The verses do not show in my father any marked poetic power, nor are the pictorial decorations by which they are surrounded as artistic as I should have expected, judging from other products of his.

. . . Of my mother's intellect there is nothing special to be remarked. . . . Such kind of matter as makes up *Chambers's Journal*, interested her—articles of popular information alternating with short stories. . . . That she knew some of my essays I gather indirectly, though I have no recollection that she ever spoke about them; but my larger works were not, I believe, attempted, or if attempted were promptly given up as incomprehensible.

Briefly characterised, she was of ordinary intelligence and of high moral nature—a moral nature of which the deficiency was the reverse of that commonly to be observed: she was not sufficiently self-asserting; altruism was too little qualified by egoism. The familiar truth that we fail properly to value the good things we have, and duly appreciate them only when they are gone, is here well illustrated. She was never sufficiently prized. Among those aspects of life which in old age incline the thoughts to pessimism, a conspicuous one is the disproportioning of rewards to merit. Speaking broadly, the world may be divided into those who deserve little and get much and those who deserve much and get little. My mother belonged to the latter class; and it is a source of unceasing regret with me that I did not do more to prevent her inclusion in this class.

## SAMUEL BUTLER, 1835-1902

*Samuel Butler's resentment against his parents is the theme of his best-known work, "The Way of All Flesh." The irritable attitude towards him of his father, Canon Butler, comes out in the first two of the passages quoted below. In the third, Samuel analyses his relations with his father, and in the fourth he narrates his death with rather laboured facetiousness. In the fifth extract, writing to his friend Miss Savage, he affects to be unmoved by the news that his mother is dying, but his letter to his sister on the same occasion ("the one whom I am very sure that she loves not the least of her children") shows that his bitterness against his parents, and especially against his mother, sprang from a feeling of neglect. In his life of his grandfather, the Headmaster of Shrewsbury, which he wrote not long before his death, he reveals his nostalgia for everything he had spent his life in attacking by bracketing his public school and his parents together as the source of whatever was noble in his character.*

### CANON BUTLER

#### I

I DON'T want to make him a schoolmaster any more than I want to make him a clergyman, but he does not strike me as filling any place, and he is of an age to be doing so. He talks of writing; but it requires more than his powers to do this. He has not that in him that will be read. He is too bumptious and not sufficiently practical.

*(Letter from Canon Butler to his Wife.)*

"I am much distressed—distressed at your opinion of myself, distressed at your obvious callousness of heart. I will not suffer, however, that I should be provoked to do other than my judgment prompts me to do. I judged it was for your good that I should not encourage you in your artist's career. This is my sole motive for refusing to assist you in it. You have shown no decided genius for drawing. You are as yet at the commencing point. To all except men of a decided professional talent it is a very uphill task, and I think still I should do wrong to afford you the slightest possible encouragement to a course for which for aught I know you may be just as unfitted as for a soldier, lawyer, schoolmaster or tutor. You speak as if in none of these professions good could be done. Pray what good are you to effect for your generation in drawing? You speak as if I had thrust these things on you. Do let me beg and beseech you to consider with whom they originated. I believe I may perhaps have suggested the law, I'm not sure about it, but the Army was yours, the mastership in a school was your own earnest wish when you went to a college, the tutorship was yours. . . . The notion that I should disinherit you is yours, not mine. I said only that I would not contribute to this career of folly. Neither do I see reason to alter this view. The notion that I will not pay you the next two quarters is yours, not mine. I stated definitely the contrary. . . ."

*(Letter from Canon Butler to Samuel.)*



He never liked me, nor I him; from my earliest recollections I can call to mind no time when I did not fear him and dislike him; over and over again I have relented towards him and said to myself that he was a good fellow after all; but I had hardly done so when he would go for me in some way or other which soured me again. I have no doubt I have made myself very disagreeable; certainly I have done many very silly and very wrong things; I am not at all sure that the fault is more his than mine. But no matter whose it is, the fact remains that for years and years I have never passed a day without thinking of him many times over as the man who was sure to be against me, and who would see the bad side rather than the good of everything I said and did. He used to say to his nurse, so my aunt Mrs. Butler said: "I'll keep you: you shan't leave: I'll keep you on purpose to torment you."

And I have felt that he has always looked upon me as something which he could badger with impunity, or very like it, as he badgered his nurse. There can be no real peace and contentment for me until either he or I are where the wicked cease from troubling. An unkind fate never threw two men together who were more naturally uncongenial than my father and myself.

his son (Note on Canon Butler, written by Samuel in 1883, and revised in 1896.)  
will be re.  
practical.

My father died in the evening—about half-past five—on Wednesday, December 29th, 1886. I and Rogers [his servant] and the nurse were alone present. I was supporting his head between my hands as he died, which he did almost without any kind of fight with death; but Rogers told me that shortly before I was called into the room he had fought hard for life. He never knew me since I saw him early in December. Nor did he know anyone. Once my cousin, Archdeacon Lloyd, began in a loud professional tone to repeat some prayers for the dying. On this my father, for a few seconds—not more—opened his eyes and obviously regained consciousness; but as he did so, there came an expression over his face as though he were saying to himself, "Oh no; it is not the Day of Judgment; it is only Tom Lloyd," and he became comatose again at once.

Seeing how carefully he was nursed, how absolutely free he was from mental pain, and how in all ways gently he was passing away, I said to my cousin, "How gently do those that have riches enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

*(Note, written in 1887 and revised in 1898.)*

MRS. BUTLER

I

My mother is ill—very ill. It is not likely that she will recover.

I had rather

It had been my father, etc.

## PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

I am pained about it. She is at Mentone, and, though my father writes as if he had no hope, they clearly do not want me to come, which is as well; for, though in such a case I should travel, yet the less I am on my feet the better. I ought to keep them up. What pains me is that I cannot begin to regain the affection now which, alas! I have long ceased to feel. . . .

*(Letter to Miss Savage.)*

### 2

MY DEAR MAY,

I could not think of myself as going about my daily affairs, and my mother lying perhaps at the point of death, without a sight of the one whom I am very sure that she loves not the least of her children. . . .

I suppose you know that *The Coming Race*—the book which *Erewhon* was allowed to have equalled, if not more—was by Lord Lytton? I thought my father and mother would be proud of my having met with the approbation of the most intelligent classes of my countrymen, and that not in half measure, but in whole measure. I am sorry I was mistaken. . . .

*(Letter to his Sister.)*

## A REVISED VERDICT

If I were asked what I flattered myself upon as being the pre-eminent virtues of Shrewsbury, I should say sincerity, downrightness, hatred of sham, love of work,

SAMUEL BUTLER

and a strong sense of duty. What little of these noble qualities I dare pretend to, I owe hardly more to my parents than to the school at which they placed me.

*(The "Life and Letters of Dr. Samuel Butler,"  
Headmaster of Shrewsbury.)*

## JOHN RUSKIN, 1819-1900

*The following passage is from the autobiography, "Præterita," which Ruskin wrote in his later years. His gift, which by this time he had brought to perfection, of being portentous about nothing is well illustrated in his admonition to the reader to note that his mother accompanied him to Oxford neither out of love, nor to preserve his innocence, but to be at hand should he get a cold in the head.*

### A MOTHER AT OXFORD

I COUNT it is just a little to my credit that I was not ashamed, but pleased, that my mother came to Oxford with me to take such care of me as she could. Through all these years of residence, during term time, she had lodging in the High Street (first in Mr. Adams's pretty house of sixteenth-century woodwork), and my father lived alone all through the week at Herne Hill, parting with wife and son at once for the son's sake. On the Saturday, he came down to us, and I went with him and my mother, in the old domestic way, to St. Peter's for the Sunday morning service: otherwise, they never appeared with me in public, lest my companions should laugh at me, or anyone else ask malicious questions concerning vintner papa and his old-fashioned wife.

. . . The reader will please also note that my mother did not come to Oxford because she could not part with me,—still less, because she distrusted me. She came simply that she might be at hand in case of accident or sudden illness. She had always been my physician as well as my nurse; on several occasions her timely watchfulness had saved me from the most serious danger;

JOHN RUSKIN

nor was her caution now, as will be seen, unjustified by the event. But for the first two years of my college life I caused her no anxiety; and my day was always happier because I could tell her at tea whatever pleased or profited me in it.

and I feel *very confident* that when you little things see and know her you will like her too. I may be wrong, but that is my strong belief, and you know, darlings, that nothing would induce me to take anyone unless I had the best reasons in the world to believe that you would both be happy with her. Apart from the impression she gave me herself, she comes recommended in the highest degree by people I know everything about and whom I have known for years. I tell you all this, dear, because you are not only getting older every day, but you are older than your years, and I feel that I can talk and write to you as if you were already a little woman. But although I have told you this much, don't run away with the idea, or let little Florrie run away with the idea, that you are not to see Miss Harvey again. On the contrary, I have particularly asked her to come and see you, and she will do so, and she knows exactly how much I think and feel that I am indebted to her for all the care she has taken of you little things till now. When you will come back to London I do not quite know at present. A little stay at Dunrobin, I should think, would do you good, but whenever you do come I shall be here, and, "strange to say," to borrow an impudent little girl's expression, I, too, "am looking forward to seeing you," though with what kind of feelings I won't exactly say, except that they are mixed. You behaved so badly, once or twice at Blankney, especially in the mornings, little Florrie particularly about the papers, that it is sometimes with a feeling of relief when I take up *The Times*, I think—Well! it won't be snatched away this morning at all events. And

now, you little darlings—Good-bye for the present, and God bless you both. . . .

*(Enclosure—A letter to his daughter's dog, "Miss Gyp")*

Don't be too venturesome with the rabbits, for if they are very numerous and you are quite alone, they might turn on you, and fancy being torn to pieces alive by a hundred infuriated rabbits! You know what happened to the little Beagle, and how the fox turned on him and nearly caught and ate him, after the other little B's. had turned off on a hare, and take warning by his fate and from the words of your good and wise and dear grandfather.



## EDMUND GOSSE, 1849-1928

*"Father and Son," published by Edmund Gosse in 1907, is an account of the long struggle over religion between Gosse and his father, Philip Gosse, a naturalist well-known in his day. The father was a Plymouth Brother, a religious fanatic, but a very kindly and, within his limits, sympathetic father. He does not appear to have been as devoid of literary taste as his son suggests. His remarks, when Edmund was nineteen, on his enthusiasm for F. W. Meyers' "St. Paul" are excellent: "Where," he asks, "are the thoughts amidst all this clash of words? They are like Falstaff's ha'p'orth of bread in the endless pints of sack. . . ."*

### FATHER AND MOTHER

#### I

IT was a curious coincidence that life had brought both my parents along similar paths to an almost identical position in respect to religious belief. . . . By a process of selection, my Father and my Mother alike had gradually, without violence, found themselves shut outside all Protestant communions, and at last they met only with a few extreme Calvinists like themselves, on terms of what might almost be called negation—with no priest, no ritual, no festivals, no ornament of any kind, nothing but the Lord's Supper and the exposition of Holy Scripture drawing these austere spirits into any sort of cohesion. They called themselves "the Brethren," simply—a title enlarged by the world outside into "Plymouth Brethren."

. . . In this strange household the advent of a child was not welcomed, but was borne with resignation. The event was thus recorded in my Father's diary:

"E. delivered of a son. Received green swallow from Jamaica."

. . . Left to my Mother's sole care, I became the centre of her solicitude. But there mingled with those happy animal instincts which sustain the strength and patience of every human mother, and were fully present with her—there mingled with these certain spiritual determinations which can be but rare. . . . Thus she wrote when I was two months old:

"We have given him to the Lord; and we trust that He will really manifest him to be His own, if he grow up; and if the Lord take him early we will not doubt that he is taken to Himself. Only, if it please the Lord to take him, I do trust we may be spared seeing him suffering in lingering illness and much pain. But in this as in all things His will is better than what we can choose. Whether his life be prolonged or not, it has already been a blessing to us, and to the saints, in leading us to much prayer, and bringing us into varied need and some trial."

. . . In consequence of the stern ordinance which I have described, not a single fiction was read or told to me during my infancy. . . . I was told about missionaries,

but never about pirates; I was familiar with humming-birds, but I had never heard of fairies. Jack the Giant-Killer, Rumpelstiltskin and Robin Hood were not of my acquaintance, and though I understood about wolves, Little Red Riding Hood was a stranger even by name.

## 4

. . . My Mother always deferred to my Father, and in his absence spoke of him to me, as if he were all-wise. I confused him in some sense with God; at all events I believed that my Father knew everything and saw everything. One morning in my sixth year, my Mother and I were alone in the morning-room, when my Father came in and announced some fact to us. I was standing on the rug, gazing at him, and when he made this statement, I remember turning quickly, in embarrassment, and looking into the fire. The shock to me was as that of a thunderbolt, for what my Father had said *was not true*. . . . The shock was not caused by any suspicion that he was not telling the truth, as it appeared to him, but by the awful proof that he was not, as I had supposed, omniscient.

## 5

. . . When the very end approached, and her mind was growing clouded, she gathered her strength together to say to my Father: "I shall walk with Him in white. Won't you take your lamb and walk with me?" Confused with sorrow and alarm, my Father failed to under-

stand her meaning. She became agitated, and she repeated two or three times: "Take our lamb, and walk with me!" Then my Father comprehended, and pressed me forward; her hand fell softly upon mine and she seemed content.

## 6

. . . As I have said, the congregation,—although docile and timid, and little able, as units, to hold their own against their minister,—behind his back were faintly hostile to this plan. [The admission into the community of the Brethren of the youthful Gosse.] . . . I think it was rather a bitter pill for some of them to swallow that a pert little boy of ten should be admitted, as a grown-up person, to all the hard-won privileges of their order. . . . To all this my Father put a stop in his own high-handed fashion. After the morning meeting, one Sunday in the autumn of 1859, he desired the attention of the saints to a personal matter which was, perhaps, not unfamiliar to them by rumour. That was, he explained, the question of the admission of his beloved son to the communion of saints in the breaking of bread. He allowed—and I sat there in evidence, palely smiling at the audience, my feet scarcely touching the ground—that I was not what is styled adult; I was not, he frankly admitted, a grown-up person. But I was adult in a knowledge of the Lord; I possessed an insight into the plan of salvation which many a hoary head might envy for its fulness, its clearness, its conformity with Scripture doctrine.

. . . I asked my Father to tell me about these "old Greek Gods." His answer was direct and disconcerting. He said—how I recollect the place and time, early in the morning, as I stood beside the window in our garish breakfast-room—he said that the so-called gods of the Greeks were the shadows cast by the vices of the heathen, and reflected their infamous lives: "It was for such things as these that God poured down brimstone and fire on the Cities of the Plain, and there is nothing in the legends of these gods, or rather devils, that it is not better for a Christian not to know." His face blazed white with Puritan fury as he said this. . . . You might have thought that he had himself escaped from some Hellenic hippodrome.

My Father's prestige was by this time considerably lessened in my mind. . . . I did not accept his condemnation of the Greeks, although I bowed to it. In private I returned to examine my steel engravings of the statues, and I reflected that they were too beautiful to be so wicked as my Father thought they were.

. . . I was docile, I was plausible, I was anything but combative; if my Father could have persuaded himself to let me alone, if he could merely have been willing to leave my subterfuges and my explanations unanalysed, all would have been well. But he refused to see any

difference in temperament between a lad of twenty and a sage of sixty.

. . . There came a moment when my self-sufficiency revolted against the police-inspection to which my "views" were incessantly subjected. There was a morning, in the hot-house at home, among the gorgeous waxen orchids which reminded my Father of the tropics in his youth, when my forbearance or my timidity gave way. The enervated air, soaked with the intoxicating perfumes of all those voluptuous flowers, may have been partly responsible for my outburst. My Father had once more put to me the customary interrogatory. Was I "walking closely with God"? Was my sense of the efficacy of the Atonement clear and sound? Had the Holy Scriptures still their full authority with me? My replies on this occasion were violent and hysterical. I have no clear recollection what it was that I said,—I desire not to recall the whimpering sentences in which I begged to be let alone, in which I demanded the right to think for myself, in which I repudiated the idea that my Father was responsible to God for my secret thoughts and convictions.

He made no answer; I broke from the odorous furnace of the conservatory, and buried my face in the cold grass upon the lawn. My visit to Devonshire, already near its close, was hurried to an end. I had scarcely arrived in London before the following letter, furiously despatched in the track of the fugitive, buried itself like an arrow in my heart: . . .

No compromise, it is seen, was offered; no proposal of a truce would have been acceptable. It was a case of

"Everything or Nothing"; and thus desperately challenged, the young man's conscience threw off once for all the yoke of his "dedication," and, as respectfully as he could, without parade or remonstrance, he took a human being's privilege to fashion his inner life for himself.

## HENRY LABOUCHERE, 1831-1912

*The following incident is taken from Hesketh Pearson's life of Labouchere, the great free-lance of Victorian politics.*

### SPARING A FATHER'S FEELINGS

JOHN LABOUCHERE was a professional puritan and a pillar of Exeter Hall, then the great temple of British intolerance, or religion as it was called. He was an earnest sorrowful man, who subscribed heavily to earnest and sorrowful movements, such as temperance, the conversion of the heathen and the distribution of the Bible. It added greatly to his sorrows that his eldest son Henry should have displayed from childhood a marked disinclination to sobriety of thought or behaviour and even appeared to read the Bible for pleasure not profit. . . . From 1850 to 1852 he (Henry) resided at Trinity College, Cambridge. It cannot be said that he used the College for any other purpose than a race-course residence. Probably his father had not realised that Newmarket was within easy driving distance. . . . When there was no racing at Newmarket and life was slow, he used to visit London. . . . During one of these visits he was strolling light-heartedly through the streets, feeling that life was extremely pleasant, when suddenly he came face to face with his father. After the first gasp of amazement, his father addressed him sternly:

"What! Henry! How is this? Why are you not at Cambridge?" But Labby was equal to the occasion. Making a slight readjustment of his features, he asked:

"Who are you? and what business is it of yours that I am walking in the Strand?"



## PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

Labouchere senior exploded:

"What business, eh? What the devil do you mean, sir! Aren't you my son?"

"My dear old gentleman," said the other, shaking his head sadly and speaking in a strained tone of voice, "you must be mad. I your son? Too ridiculous!" and he brushed his parent aside.

Anxious to avoid a misunderstanding, he caught the next train to Cambridge, noting with interest that his father, labouring under the same anxiety, had caught it too. On arrival at Cambridge he was well down the platform before the train had come to a stop and lost no time in repairing to his College, where he was soon to be seen, gowned and among his books. In a little while his studies were interrupted. There was a series of imperative knocks, and Mr. John Labouchere was disclosed, panting and fuming.

"Why, dad! This is a pleasure!"

Astonishment and delight fought for possession of the son's features. Explanations followed, incredulity was properly registered, and, in the words of the rehabilitated student, "I was carried to the Lion and given a most excellent dinner, of which after my adventure I stood in real need."

## BRAMWELL BOOTH, 1856-1929

*"The Life of Bramwell Booth," the second head of the Salvation Army, by his daughter Catherine Bramwell Booth, is an interesting document. The fact that Bramwell Booth had very little time to spare for his family is explained by his daughter as a denying of his nature on behalf of his work for the Salvation Army; but the second extract shows that when he was being gradually excluded from the organisation to which he had sacrificed his domestic life, he did not take as much pleasure in the society of his family as might have been expected.*

### A "MOTHERER"

MY father was a "motherer" long before he was out of his 'teens; before he was married he "mothered" his own father and mother, and he continued to do so until their death. Read his letters to his sisters and brothers, to officers of The Salvation Army, to the troubled everywhere, and you will know that here was a man whose very life it was to gather to his heart and shelter there the "little ones" among men, the sorrowful, the oppressed, the aspiring and the despairing. To spend themselves for others is the luxury of such souls.

Now to one of this company the claims of his own children were trebled in strength, and in his sacrifice of those claims he suffered a denying of his own nature quite incomprehensible to the majority of men. He bowed his heart to the mystery and truth of Christ's hard saying: "He that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."

It is quite possible he was mistaken in the extreme line he took. Did Christ require of him such an abandon-

ment of the reasonable enjoyment of what were, after all, God-given opportunities for happiness? Did the Army usurp too large a share of what he was and what he possessed? He would have argued, "Have not men given as much for their country, for science, even for mere gain?" To which one might reply, "Yes, but was it right?" I never heard this discussed at home. I do not think he ever questioned himself about it. The Army came first and the position was accepted by us all as part of the existing order, and undoubtedly he was satisfied of the rightness of the course he took.

There were seven of us. The order of our coming being three daughters and a son, and two daughters and a son. The youngest, William Wycliffe, was born on December 7th, 1895. I was twelve years old, and my mother had shared with me the beautiful mystery of the babe's advent. . . .

Almost the keenest delight of our childhood was to be read aloud to by our mother. Once I remember we were just assembled for the evening treat when my father came in unexpectedly; he took the book and read. And how gay we were! Laughter interrupted the proceedings again and again; he threw back his head, and we all shouted together. Was Brer Rabbit ever so irresistible or Brer Fox so splendidly funny as that night? I doubt it. I think on the only other occasions on which he read aloud to us youngsters, he read poetry. *The Ancient Mariner*, Poe's *Raven*, *Paradise Lost*, Pollok's *Course of Time*; he knew how to draw the music from the words.

He sometimes worked on Sundays with Grandfather,

## BRAMWELL BOOTH

or was writing at home himself. On such days he would spend a little more time singing with us:

Where is now the good Elijah?  
Safe in the Promised Land.  
By and by we hope to meet him,  
Safe in the Promised Land,

was one song much in request. He improvised verses and led the clapping! . . . He specially liked "Though I wandered far from Jesus"—a Salvation Army song, written by a converted drunkard whom my father loved; this was always included. I can hear the tone of his voice now as he sang the chorus: "Yes, He gives me peace and pardon, Joy without alloy." "We'll cross the river of Jordan, happy, happy," was another we nearly always included. Several of the babes made their first attempt at singing by joining in with "Happy, happy." Then he would pray with us. To hear him pray as he did on those occasions, or when, not having gone to the office so early as usual, he instead of our mother took family prayers, made us know that he knew God was near. God was a Friend, with Whom our father talked.

## HIS LAST DAYS (1928)

July and August are spent in Surrey, where he drives and walks about the heather-clad common. Now is revealed the full extent of the lack in his resources. Was anyone to blame? His upbringing? His circumstances? Himself? This man of wide outlook, versatile of thought,

## PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

of unflagging enthusiasm, has no hobby. . . . His dear ones rack their ingenuity. A game of chess may occupy an hour, but he is more than likely to break off in the middle and begin to discuss the forbidden subjects.

## LORD BERNERS, 1883-

*The passages given below are from "First Childhood," the account of his early years recently published by Lord Berners.*

### HIS PARENTS

FAR be it from me to cast aspersions on one of the partners who were kind enough to bring me into the world; nevertheless, I must confess that I have a shrewd suspicion that my grandfather's great wealth had some influence upon my father's choice. It is difficult to believe that he could ever have been seriously in love with my mother. But it is only fair to add that he did not seem to be the kind of man who could ever have been seriously in love with anyone.

. . . It was some time before I came to understand the lack of affection that existed between my two parents. I thought at first that it was the normal relationship between husbands and wives. Later on, when I grew more sophisticated, I was able to diagnose more accurately the hopelessness of the case. My father was worldly, cynical, intolerant of any kind of inferiority, reserved and self-possessed. My mother was unworldly, naive, impulsive, and undecided, and in my father's presence she was always at her worst.

. . . I used to admire and enjoy my father's occasional flashes of wit. But I feared and disliked the long periods of silence and moodiness that intervened, and even his wit, within the family circle, was only exercised, as a rule, at the expense of my mother or her friends.

I remember one instance of this, which made me laugh very much at the time. My mother had rather a tendency

to encourage bores. There was one friend of hers whom my father particularly disliked, a certain Colonel Stokes, a foolish old fellow who seemed to live in a perpetual state of righteous indignation. He used to write letters to the papers, and he had a red, military face that looked as if it might go off bang at any moment. Colonel Stokes was always bubbling over with local gossip and, with the subtle instinct bores always seem to possess for the inapposite, he would invariably insist on recounting his grievances to my father. One day a dreadful thing happened. One of our neighbours, it appeared, had lost his temper and kicked his wife in public. This had upset the Colonel very much. "I mean to say," he protested. "To kick your wife! And in public, too! It's not cricket, is it?"

"No," said my father, stifling a yawn; "it seems to me more like football."

. . . He never attempted to take any active part in my education. Once, when my mother suggested that, for some offence or other, he should beat me, he merely said that he couldn't be bothered. I suppose I ought to have been grateful to him, but I remember feeling a little offended by his lack of interest.

It is said that a child's idea of God is often based on the characteristics of its male parent. If this is the case, it may perhaps account for the somewhat peculiar ideas I entertained, in my childhood, with regard to the Deity. I remember, on an occasion when I was misbehaving, my nurse said: "If you're not careful, one of these days God will jump out from behind a cloud and catch you such a whack!" The threat was an alarming one, but I

was not perturbed and retorted, "Nonsense! God doesn't care WHAT we do."

... There is no doubt that, during my early childhood, the violence of my temper was very useful in preserving me from punishment. It certainly did so on the occasion of my first and only experience of corporal chastisement.

This took place when I threw my mother's spaniel out of the window. Let me hasten to assure dog-lovers that this action was not inspired by innate cruelty or even by a hatred for dogs in general. It was due, rather, to a false association of ideas, an erroneous form of reasoning to which the human mind is particularly prone. I had heard somebody say that if you threw a dog into water it would instinctively swim. Reflection upon this biological fact led me to wonder if a dog, when thrown into the air, would also instinctively fly. Happening to see my mother's spaniel lying near an open window on the first floor, I felt that here was a good opportunity to make the experiment. It was a fat dog, and I had some difficulty in lifting it up on to the window-sill. After giving it an encouraging pat, I pushed it off. I watched the unfortunate animal gyrating in the air, its long ringleted ears and tail spread out by centrifugal force. (Incidentally it bore a strong resemblance to Elizabeth Barrett Browning.) But it appeared to be making no effort whatever to fly.

My mother was excusably infuriated by what appeared to her to be an act of wanton cruelty (although the animal had fallen unscathed into a lilac bush), and I failed to convince her of the scientific aspect of the



experiment. She made up her mind to cross the educational Rubicon and to give me my first thrashing. This was the occasion on which she appealed in vain to my father. By the time she had selected a convenient implement (which happened to be a bedroom slipper), I fancy her resolution had already weakened. She set about it in a half-hearted fashion. Nevertheless, the first blow acted upon me as a spark in a powder magazine. With em-purpled face, foaming at the mouth, I wrested the slipper from her hand and began belabouring her throat and bosom with such violence that she ended by flying in terror from the room.

## WILLIAM GERHARDI, 1895-

*William Gerhardi's parents, English by birth, lived in St. Petersburg before the war. Reduced to poverty by the Revolution, they returned to England. After a period in Bolton, described below, they moved to Innsbruck, where Mr. Gerhardi died, and William Gerhardi and his mother then settled for a time in Toulon. The story of these vicissitudes is given in William Gerhardi's "Memoirs of a Polyglot."*

### BOLTON

MY father, though he had no more money, continued from habit to support his sisters abroad, who noted in their letters to him that he was paralysed, but were happy he was not, like themselves with their neuralgia, in any physical pain. My parents' Petrograd funds having evaporated, they came to Bolton, where there were some remnants of Grandfather Wadsworth's friends, and my mother started a shop of "Parisian" hats and gowns which my young sister, who lived in Paris, sent to her from time to time. My mother ran this shop single-handed, as well as looking after my father, who was entirely dependent on her as he could not move from his chair. There he sat day after day. Formerly he had only read newspapers. Now he began to read books, too. When tired of reading he would begin to brood on the past; and when tired of thinking, he read again. He sat there, pulling out his watch at intervals, waiting for the evening paper, restless, anxious to get time on, to kill time.

He had extravagant hopes of making money by sending every pound or every ten-shilling note he could lay his

## PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

hands on to dubious brokers in London, who advertised for likely victims. His old financial perspicacity seemed to have left him, and he was invariably cheated by those sharks of the mart. He said he had to make a thousand pounds to enable him to go off by himself to London and Paris and Vienna with a manservant. His right hand was twisted and paralysed, but with his left he managed to type letters to these sharks with one finger on a rusty old typewriter of a primitive model; and sometimes the keys would jam, when my father would angrily tear out the sheet and, his left hand propping his chin, sit sulkily by the fire.

When my mother refused to give him any more money for his speculations, he would keep up a sustained scream at regular intervals to force her hand, or compromise her with the neighbours. Nothing, however, would damp his hopes, which we recognised was a good thing for him as it kept up his spirits. But as every little bit of money we gave him was immediately lost in these financial transactions, one often wished that his spirit might be kept up in some other way.

### MONTE CARLO

. . . My father, conceiving the idea that, in proportion to the collapse of his body, his mind had developed to the highest degree of mental acuteness, declared one day that he had solved the riddle of how to make a fortune at roulette. He grew more and more insistent till I, knowing nothing of gambling, wrote to Gamage's for a roulette, after which my father and I spent many

weeks testing his system. . . . After an unbroken run of luck, my father's and my luck turned, and the system proved capable of occasional losses, nevertheless balanced by gains. My father deprecated the losses, ascribing them to our unfair and excessive demands on the roulette. We had tested the game for a fortnight, he said, and it had proved capable of providing us with a fortune. Why go on tempting Providence? Why not be modest and reasonable and proceed forthwith to Monte Carlo to put theory into practice, dreams into reality, numbers into money? My father and I were accustomed to treat each other like gentlemen, and out of pity for him I also professed to deprecate the recent losses in our tests. He was so eager I should go, so anxious I should not drop the scheme, since there was no one else to try it out, that I had not the heart to disappoint him. My father slyly over-emphasised the sportingness of gambling. And when he wanted some money to put on a horse he told me that he was prompted by the love of sport, and that sport was the backbone of the country. The obvious pleasure which he felt in thinking that he had found a way to get round me prevented me from questioning either that gambling was sport, or sport the backbone of England. I gathered such resources as I could lay hands on and proceeded to Monte Carlo.

. . . So I cut my losses and left Monte Carlo, that city of shimmering black and gold, that very night for London.

. . . When I arrived (in Bolton) there was a general mood of generosity in all members of the family. Each

offered to do his best, each held out his savings ready to throw them into the common pool. My father, who had twenty pounds' worth of shares in some Paris concern, could be dissuaded only with difficulty from selling them to make up part of my losses. "It was all my fault," he said. "I thought I'd discovered a system, but it's this damned roulette"; and suddenly he cried.

### THE NEW RIVIERA

. . . When my mother came back she took a little house of her own, so that whenever we quarrelled we could each retire dramatically to our own house, which we would do, only to come back again in the morning. For the most part we lived together; either in her house or in mine.

What a winter! What miseries to endure! We were, it is true, on the *New Riviera*. But was it near Nice or Monte Carlo? Near enough, one had thought, at the time of settling at Toulon. But for all the difference it made we might have stayed in England. My mother's life consisted in going to the *épicerie* two or three times a day, buying an eighth of a kilo of ham, half a kilo of cheese, and some nondescript stuff to throw into the soup. Eggs, thank God, we bought from a peasant neighbour, who, to save us trouble, as a rule sent her son with them, who delivered them unwillingly. Milk was brought to the house by a grimy milkmaid at unforeseen hours, and if we were not on the spot to pay her, she took it away again, so that we had to go a mile to fetch it, or, if we preferred a short cut, we climbed

over barbed-wire fences in the slush and the dark, while dogs barked ferociously at us, and even snapped at our heels. Nor did the weather favour us. It rained for weeks on end. Our little servant girl was exhausted. The roof leaked. The chimney would not draw. The proprietor's boasted drainage proved ineffective. The walls were so wet that my boots got all green and mouldy inside within a week of arrival. Apart from the proprietor, who came at week-ends and ruined two days of the week for us, and our peasant neighbour, whom we tried to avoid, and a pious family who practised Adventist rites assiduously, we had no company but our own; and an exchange of opinion invariably ended by dusk in our withdrawing into ourselves, I to my cubicle, my mother to hers.

If my mother and I differ occasionally, it is no reflection on either of us. To my father I only said what I deemed agreeable; to my mother I tell the truth. I have no thought, no feeling that I cannot share with my mother; and she is like a second conscience to me, her eyes like a mirror reflecting my own image.

## DAPHNE DU MAURIER

*The pains and, occasionally, pleasures incident to being the ageing father of daughters are illuminatingly set forth in the following extracts from Miss Daphne du Maurier's well-known biography of her father, Gerald du Maurier.*

### GERALD

... HE was baffling to his friends, and often a problem to himself; he was so easily moved to laughter and to tears, careless one moment and emotional the next, with sudden inexplicable silences and equally sudden indiscretions.

His children were growing up now, and they bewildered him; they were out of his reach in a year, with plans of their own, with friends, with secrets they did not tell. Adolescence was something he had not figured upon; he had not reckoned on that little world of experience that is an imposing barrier between the early and the later 'teens, and the children who had been companions at fourteen were strangers at nineteen.

They seemed old beyond their years, with a queer, half-fledged wisdom picked up from books and odd scraps of gossip; they talked with assurance about things they did not understand; and instead of laughing at their puppy knowledge and marking time while they should find their feet, he worked himself up into little states of emotion and distress, creating an atmosphere of suspicion and unrest, asking sudden and embarrassing questions, wandering about with books of psychology under his arm, tearing at their privacy, and hurt by their reserve. Like many men, he had a poor memory for his

own youth; he could remember only his follies and his indiscretions, which filled him with alarm for fear his children should do the same, and he forgot that their lack of friendliness was a necessary development in their character; that they held their tongues even as he had held his tongue before Mummie and Papa.

There is, alas! a world of difference between the girl of eighteen and the man of fifty, especially when they are father and daughter. The one is resentful of the other. The girl mocks at experience and detests the voice of authority; the man yearns for companionship and does not know how to attain it. They stand side by side, with the barrier of years between them, and both are too shy to break it down; both are too diffident, too self-conscious. They chat about superficialities, and avoid each other's eyes, while all the time they are aware that the moments are passing, and the years will not bring them nearer to one another. Gerald was hungry for companionship; he longed for Angela and Daphne to tell him everything, to discuss their friends, to solve their problems, to share their troubles; but the very quality of his emotion made them shy. They could not admit him into their confidence, and they drew back like snails into their respective shells.

It was not only Gerald's tragedy. It is the tragedy of every father and every daughter since the world began. But he took it harder than most. He brooded upon it, and nursed it in his mind. It gave to him a little added bitterness which was peculiar to him and strangely pathetic. But his daughters shut their eyes to it; they pushed it away from their minds; they stood rooted to



their generation, and would not admit him to their world. There might have been some hope for him had he allowed himself to become the schoolboy brother that he sometimes tried to be, or even if he had kept firmly to his pedestal as father, a figure of wisdom and respect; but he was so changeful, so inconsequent a man, a judge intolerant and hard one day, and human, all too human, on the morrow. They were never quite sure of him, never certain of his mood, and they walked away from him, leaving him a lonely, rather hesitating figure, to find consolation in his little restaurant lunches, listening to the confidences that might have been theirs.

He was proud of them, too, in a funny self-conscious way, and if anyone else ventured to criticise his children, he was aflame at once, returning thrust for thrust, jealous for their sake, proud for their reputation.

. . . And they were not always hard on him; they were not always unkind. Angela took her position as eldest daughter with some sense of responsibility. She sat with him at dinner if Mo was down in London. She put off appointments, dinner engagements, when he was likely to be alone. She played cards with him; she was interested in the theatre; she read plays. Daphne was more elusive; she kept disappearing to Paris and to Cornwall. She was independent. She began to make money on her own, and when she chose to come home from time to time he used to hang about in the hall, shy and pathetically hopeful, wondering whether she would spend the day with him, waiting for her to suggest it on her own accord.

Seeing him more seldom, she learned things about

him that she might not have understood had she been continually at home. She was a confidante at times, an ally, a listener to his little moods and tales. He talked about the past and about the present; he confessed his doubts of the future; and once or twice he clung to her like a small boy and whispered his fears of shadows, of darkness, of the grey hours before dawn. He told her about the family; about Papa, about Trixie. He drew a pattern of the old days, the happy, careless days when he was twenty-one, and she laughed with him and at him, and yawned sometimes and did not listen, while the air at Boulestin's grew thick with the smoke of his cigarette and that full, rather meaty smell of after-lunch, and the hands of the clock pointed to half-past three. Or his would be a gay mood, a ribald mood, a schoolboy practical-joking mood, and off they would go to a toy-shop to buy a box of tricks; to Fortnum's to buy unnecessary presents. . . . And from the heavy-hearted, discontented man of the morning he developed suddenly, for no reason, . . . into a laughing cavalier, twenty years younger than he had been before, walking swiftly, swinging a stick, singing at the top of his voice:

Why are you so mean to me?

## LORD RIBBLESDALE

*The extract given below is from the memoir written by Lord Ribblesdale of his son Charles Lister, who was killed in the Great War. Lister was a well-known figure at Oxford shortly before the war. Once, at the Oxford Union, there was a heated debate over the justice of a measure taken by the Union to suppress an undergraduate paper which had been attacking it. The President, Mr. (now Father) Ronald Knox, soon gave up the attempt to control the meeting, which, according to the sympathies of its individual members, applauded or bellowed at each successive speaker, until at last, in a momentary lull, Lister rose and, addressing the President in a mildly inquiring tone, asked: "Sir, is this the union?"*

### CHARLES LISTER

I DO not think he meddled much with English Poetry: though he had a haphazard sort of acquaintance with its notables. Pope he neglected, and when he was about thirteen dismissed as an ingenious writer. When at Rome he was absorbed in Dante, and read it in Italian, but as we were not on common ground I paid little attention to several things he said to me about this. I got on better when, as he often did, he commended to me the adventures of the *Odyssey* and the justice and vitality of its epithets and figures.

. . . I now come to his relations with the Independent Labour Party, but cannot fix with any exactness their beginnings; anyhow, he took to this kind of thing—at least to Socialism—whilst he was still at Eton. An Eton friend of his writes that as he first remembered him in 1902, he did not realize him as a "budding Socialist";

it was not until 1905, he writes, that this side appeared and shone out fully. . . .

Yet his Socialism—I use this meaningless word for lack of a better—was of quite a good-natured sort. . . . Charles had no quarrel with plutocracy, or with Grosvenor Square; they were in themselves Causes, and so respectable; nor did he ever bother about persons or their views. For instance, in the days when he favoured nationalization of the raw material of industry—including our few family acres—and a comprehensive reconstruction of society, he never weakened in his liking for the landed gentry, the amusements of the leisured, and the Anglican clergy. Even the one or two important nobles who from time to time he encountered did not appear to make any disagreeable impression on him; indeed he often commended their spacious ways of providing outdoor pleasures and good fare for themselves and others.

. . . The day came when he elected to be received into its bosom (the I.L.P.); we were neither pleased nor displeased. His mother thought it a mistake to contract himself out of being helped by the machinery and caucus support of either of the two great recognized parties—at that time a condition of adoption and grace—but she was reassured by Mr. A. J. Balfour, who was mildly interested and approving. Indeed, he pointed out to her that Charles would get all sorts of experience and some sort of special knowledge which might be of more use to him in after-life than if he kept Selling Platers or ran an actress. I was present, and I heartily concurred.

. . . It is very difficult to hit on the seemly balance of anything of the kind I am trying to write, especially

having regard to our close relationship and to our always having been great friends and a good deal together. Memory takes me tightly by the hand and leads me back to all kinds of scenes and incidents and places in his company: to the flat horizons and the tulips and the picture galleries of Holland; to charming Munich, its opera and its Bach-abends, its overheated but excellent hotel, its superlative caviare and beer; to the grey-green sweep of the Roman Campagna and hounds running over the *stationatas*; to Milan and to Bergamo; to the steep hills and stones above Helmsdale; to Ross's Hotel and our Symposia with Ross himself—lovely August weather; liver-and-white pointers of beauty and staunchness; to many talks and rides and walks; to London theatres and pavements; to the uplands and rough pastures of Wigglesworth and Bowland.

## PAT O'MARA

*The following extracts are from "The Autobiography of a Liverpool Slummy," published by Pat O'Mara two years ago.*

### IN A LIVERPOOL SLUM

#### I

MY mother always thinks of my birth in Harris's as the most horrible experience of her miserable married life. She should have been delivered late Saturday night, but the terror engendered by my father's drunken capers (he was in a fearful mood that night), and her own forgetfulness in not taking the necessary oils delayed my birth until eight o'clock Sunday morning. All through the night my mother lay in bed terrified and suffering fearfully. My father was beside her, jabbering incoherently, hopelessly drunk. At three o'clock in the morning, he kicked her off the bed, in which cramped position she lay groaning until seven o'clock, when a scream from her brought the tipsy Mrs. Harris upstairs. A nurse was gotten from Princess Road Nurses' Home. When she came, my father crept out of the room under her astounded stare. I was delivered. I have no record what happened to my sister Alice during this period. She, two-and-a-half years old then, and a very nervous child, was the lone survivor of the "Court" life. Now I was here to keep her company.

Gradually, by that mysteriously baffling recovery so typical of her, my mother got well again and settled into the torture for which she seemed fated. All hopes, dreams of legacies, were gone now. That she was living with a

madman—and would have to keep on living with him in order to live at all—was quite obvious to her by now. Moreover, being very religious, this had another, deeper, aspect for her. The children must somehow be raised as good Catholics—that must come first. If she left my father, this would be impossible, for little economic help was furnished to husband-deserters. My mother's application for a separation would have been listened to unsympathetically, as well she knew, and there would never have been much effort made to make my father support us. The government at that time (this was before the days of Mrs. Pankhurst) didn't take the Single Standard seriously. So my mother's choice lay between suicide and torture, and as the former was impossible (since she was a Catholic) she had no recourse but to submit grimly to the latter.

My father by now was a regular dock laborer, living the usual life of a dock laborer of that period, seeking work when and where he liked and chucking it when he liked. He hated my mother intensely, because by now he realised that she had married him for the alleged legacy and stayed with him only for the sake of the two children. Added to this was the Molloy clan's contempt for him. During this hectic period my grandmother used to scan the evening papers with trepidation, fearful and expectant of reading, as she used to say, of "some awful tragedy nearby. If it was me—I'd do for him!"

To even things, my father waxed very contemptuous about my mother's people. He had a stock criticism for my mother: "You're all bloody slummies and were raised in S—— houses!" He never looked for more than

a couple of days' work. This would ensure the rent and enough to get the barest necessities of living. Two days' work would net him ten shillings, out of which, on Saturday, my mother, after much wrangling, would be lucky to get six, the other four being kept by him as entrée to the public-houses where he could play his baiting of sailors or other available "catch-ons."

This baiting business was his favorite pastime; we never knew who was coming into our rooms next. At three years of age, I myself, with my mother's vivid imagination and my father's unconscious tuition, was an inveterate and expert cadger and always knew how best to maneuver a new guest—even a foreigner with scant knowledge of English—into giving me a penny or a halfpenny. The baiting trick worked something like this. My father had an old fireman's book—stolen from someone—which gave him entrée to maritime habitats usually not open to landlubbers. Accordingly, either around frigid Cannon Place or at the bar of the Flag of All Nations, he would ferret and ferret until something resembling an easy mark turned up, usually in the guise of some young Scandinavian sailorman, just paid off and in a very convivial mood. These impromptu guests were a constant source of worry to my mother, who could see through the whole rotten game and who more often than not, after they had departed, received a beating from my irate father for allowing her sympathies to assist them out of a predicament. Sometimes, when these fellows would sober up, they would wonder what my mother could be doing with such a man, and very often openly expressed their views. My father would



say nothing, but, after they had gone, he would first accuse her, my mother, of infidelity, then beat her. These sailormen would come to the house with the obvious intent of seducing my mother (having been through similar situations before), but the moment the actual circumstances dawned upon them, the thought would vanish from their minds.

## 2

. . . It was heaven to live away from our father, even though fear of his imminent arrival did destroy much of the pleasure. We had heard he was staying down at the fourpenny doss-house; all we hoped and prayed for was that he would continue to do so. At night, at every noise outside our door, our faces would constrict and the words, "It's him!" would be spoken by all three of us. But as the weeks went by our apprehension waned a little, and when we locked the door we felt a reasonable degree of safety. The bobby had told us not to let him in, and we were going to take him at his word. There was no home for my father here any more.

But six weeks after he had left us, after hearing tales of Alice and me both wearing boots, and working, Enoch Arden returned. We were in the kitchen drinking tea with Mrs. Tar, just a little past midnight, when there came a knock at the door. In the instant I think all of us, save Mrs. Tar, knew. "Who's there?" I asked. "Open this bloody door!" came the command. We refused. Then, amid fuming and cursing, he crashed it in and charged in among us very drunk and with murder in his

eyes. He made straight for me, leering: "You wouldn't open the door, would you, little maneen, eh?" Then he struck me a hard blow in the mouth, throwing me into a corner. Next, Mrs. Tar was thrown out, and Alice swept aside; then he made for his constant quarry, my mother, falsely accusing her of all sorts of sins.

Mother, exhausted after a hard day's work, was in no condition to withstand anything like this, and, lying in the corner with blood pouring from my mouth, I felt that a severe beating now would be the end for her. I saw her face whiten as he took her throat in his hands, and I heard her scream as they fell to the floor together, with him uppermost. Alice had fled in terror. I rose and picked up the big iron kettle and brought it down on his head with all the force at my command, and as he sagged I brought it down again and again, and undoubtedly I would have killed him had my mother not grasped my arm and commanded me in the name of God to stop.

I don't remember exactly everything that happened that night. The bobbies came, as they always do come, after the fight, and my father was taken away in the ambulance, my mother over my protests assuming responsibility for his condition. She was taken along to the Argyle Street lock-up, where the following morning Magistrate Stuart Deacon, knowing of our awful history, released her. The next day she applied to Dale Street for an official police separation from my father (this would make it criminal in the future for him to bother us) and cast about for another place to live, for the Harrises, like everyone else, now demanded that all, or

## PARENTS AND CHILDREN: AN ANTHOLOGY

at least half of us, leave. A kindly woman, Mrs. Andrews, who lived two doors farther up the street, had two rooms that would just suit us and, knowing my mother, she consented to rent them to her, if my mother got the legal separation. This being produced, she let us in.

By the time my father was released from the hospital, his head swathed in bandages, we had comfortably established ourselves in our new domicile. My mother and Alice, however, were thoughtful of his welfare to the last. We took only what we absolutely needed and left his rooms very clean and with utensils for bachelor housekeeping if he cared to do that. The night before he returned, Alice even saw to it that there was bread and some tea and corned meat on the table. But live with him—that was a thing of the past. Finished!

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